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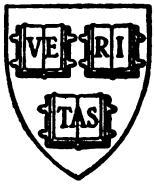

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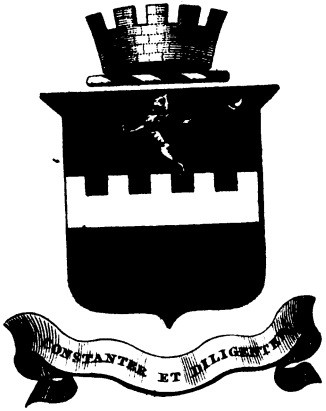

A

SERIES OF LETTERS

BETWEEN

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER

AND

MISS CATHERINE TALBOT,

FROM THE YEAR 1741 TO 1770.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

LETTERS

FROM

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER TO MRS. VESEY,

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1763 AND 1787;

PUBLISHED FROM THE

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS IN THE POSSESSION

OF THE

REV. MONTAGU PENNINGTON, M.A.

VICAR OF NORTHBOURN, IN KENT, HER NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR.

We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends.

PSALM lv. Old Version.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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LETTERS

FROM

MRS. CARTER TO MRS. VESEY.

LETTERS

FROM

MRS. CARTER TO MRS. VESEY.

LETTER I.

Clarges Street, *Jan.* 3, 1770.

YOUR Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, which was kindly intended to reach me before I left Deal, did not arrive till some days after I got here, which will make my excuses for its appearing less expeditious than usual. You did not believe yourself when you talked of your image being jostled out of its place. I am sure you would not love me, as I hope you do, if you could suppose I suffered any attention to my present friends to encroach on the rights of the absent. Did you ever experience any such instance during the whole time that you have known me?

I must answer your kind enquiries about the subject so near my heart, and can answer them with more comfort than I expected or hoped. I found my dear and invaluable friend, I thank God, upon the whole much better than from the accounts I had received I had reason to expect. The most alarming, and what the physicians pronounced the most incurable part of her disorder is in such a state as may admit, I hope, of her living many years with a small degree of suffering; so that if she can regain her strength, and recover the use of her limbs, her life, which is so great a blessing to her friends, will not, I hope, be burdensome to herself; though I am persuaded she must have felt disappointed at being called back from that heaven, of which a few weeks ago she was so nearly within view.

Though it may not often be safe for two such visionaries as you and me to differ from the unsophisticated good sense of Mrs. Handcock, I think we may be justified in our taste for the solemn concert of howling winds and dashing waves. The rude and boisterous elements are certainly of as real use in the general system as those of a more gentle and placid temper; and besides the wise purposes which they answer with regard to inanimate creation, it is certainly a subject of high admiration and gratitude to consider in what an unexpli-

explicable manner they are adapted to amuse the imagination by various kinds of delight, and to mend the heart by various kinds of feelings. The gracious Author of our being seems, in compassion to our weak and imperfect virtue, to have furnished it with an adventitious and external aid, even from those objects which appear to have no natural connection with it. For the satisfying of Mrs. Handcock's conscience, and to procure her indulgence to our taste, pray remind her that in all probability people would not be so good even as they are if we had only "perpetual calms and cloudless skies." Amidst the gay and smiling scenes of nature our minds are engaged in an attention to our own enjoyments; amidst the unrelenting storm and desolating torrent, our hearts are awed and softened to a tender sensibility of the wants and distreses of others.

As Mrs. Montagu talks of writing to you very soon, I imagine she will give you an account of how well she is, she is indeed better than I have known her for years. I hope this wicked town will not undo all that she has acquired since last autumn. Mrs. J. Pitt is much better than when I saw her at Sunning Hill, and Mrs. Dunbar cannot get rid of her nervous complaints. Mr. Dunbar has parted with Lovel Farm, which I cannot help regretting, as it seemed so perfectly well adapted

to Mrs. Dunbar's mind. But she does not seem to quit it with any reluctance. The coach is at the door, so adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey. My love to Mrs. Handcock. Pray let me hear from you soon, and tell me how you do, and what you do, and what you think. God bless you!

LETTER LI.

Clarges Street, *Feb.* 13, 1770.

It was not till yesterday, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I received your kind enquiry after me. I am greatly obliged to you for the solicitude you express about me, and I ought not to delay giving you some account of myself. Do not be uneasy for me; I shall do very well. Never did my mind feel a more peaceful calm, than, I thank God, it enjoys at present. My spirits indeed are not lively, nor can I yet bear mixed companies; but I do not withdraw myself from the society of my friends;

* Mrs. Carter's Letter, giving an account of Miss Talbot's death, is published page 277 of her Memoirs, quarto edition; and likewise at the conclusion of the Letters between Miss Talbot and Mrs. Carter in this collection.

and

and though I am not capable of any high degree of pleasure, my thoughts are perfectly awake to the innumerable and unmerited blessings which I enjoy, and I hope no deprivation will ever make me forget how sensibly I should feel the loss of any of those which remain. Under these restrictions I believe you will not accuse me of indulging any unreasonable grief, by fixing my attention as much as possible on the dear object who has engaged it for so long a course of years. While she was in a mortal state I was accustomed to look up to her as the most perfect pattern of goodness I ever knew; and now my thoughts pursue her into the world of glorified spirits with more awful impressions: and I cannot help considering her sometimes as more present to my mind than when the veil of corporeal obstruction confused her view. There is no describing the various sentiments with which this idea strikes me—From the whole of what I feel on this affecting subject, I find reason for thankfulness to Him who "gives and takes away," with equal goodness to all, whose inconsiderate folly does not counteract and disappoint the gracious purpose of all his various dispensations, to the children of men. Pray for me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that I may not incur this guilt.——I have been laying open my internal state in a very unreserved manner: it will at least help you to discover that though I

am

am deeply affected my mind is not unhappy; and at this I know you will kindly rejoice. You have too much feeling, I am sure, not to be pleased to hear that poor Mrs. Talbot submits to her affliction with perfect resignation, and is wonderfully supported under it.

I have the pleasure to inform you Mrs. Dunbar is much better, and has not any one consumptive symptom; her disorder is on her nerves; she is very little fallen away, and accompanies Mrs. J. Pitt this evening to a very large party at Mrs. Montagu's: Mr. Dunbar is in search of a better house, but en attendant they seem very happy in South Street. Mrs. Montagu continues upon the whole in better health than usual, but I fear will be hurt by the fatigues of the winter. Fashionable life is a hard service, and when once people are engaged in it, the dismission I suppose is not very easily procured.

Never was there a more true position than your's, that "few people give themselves time to be friends," a natural consequence of a more general maxim, that few people give themselves time to be as wise, as good, and happy, as Heaven designed them even in the present mortal state.

LETTER LII.

Clarges Street, *Feb.* 25, 1770.

BEFORE this time, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I imagine you must have received two Letters from me, writ since that which I had from you directed to Deal. I believe that in both, and I am sure I did in one, mention Mrs. Dunbar, but I cannot forbear answering your Note, which Mrs. Montagu gave me last night, for fear you should imagine there is any alteration for the worse. Mrs. Dunbar is certainly better, but nervous disorders hang long on hand, as I have woeful experience, and are a most miserable state of suffering; but I met her yesterday at Lady F. Coningsby's, appearing very tolerable; she builds her hopes of recovery on warm weather and sea bathing, and there is a great probability that she conjectures right. Mrs. Montagu continues in better health than I almost ever remember her. Our friends in Arlington Street are likewise well. I dined and spent a very quiet evening there on Tuesday, in a very small company. Indeed my spirits are by no means equal to a large one.

What

What a lesson to ambition, if ambition could feel, is the rapid progress of our late Chancellor *, from his exaltation to his grave! He refused the seals on Wednesday morning, accepted them on Wednesday night, was taken ill on Thursday, and was dead before Saturday night!

Pray direct your Letters to myself; for if you enclose them to our dear careless friend, they sometimes lie several days quietly in her dressing-room, before she thinks of giving them to me. And tell me in your next whether I may enclose your's to Mr. Vesey, for I do not understand the extent of your privileges. Adieu, my poor head will hold out no longer, than while I send my affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock, and beg to have the pleasure of hearing from you very soon.

* Lord Morden, better known by the name of Mr. Charles Yorke. The circumstances of this event are sufficiently public.

LETTER LIII.

Clarges Street, *March* 3, 1770.

I HOPE, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that the enclosed drawing and the description will give *you* an idea of Miss Finch's dress, though it would be utterly unintelligible to *me*, from my total ignorance of the subject. As there was some time necessary for adjusting the affair, it was not possible for me to be more expeditious, though Miss Freame was so good as to make all imaginable dispatch in procuring all the materials and assistances requisite for giving as complete an idea as might be.

I wrote to you about a fortnight ago, but I fancy you had not received my Letter when your's was writ. You are wiser in the conduct of your rage for amusements in Ireland, than we are here, as you certainly avoid some inconveniencies by having your habit balls without masques. Nothing but such a concealment could have encouraged a scandalous insult on the company in the last masquerade, from some wretch or other who appeared in a dress, which was contrived to represent no dress at all: and is said to have been extremely indecent.

I have

I have so miserable a fit of the head-ache that writing is extremely painful to me; but I cannot conclude without giving you the pleasure of knowing that the Essay on Shakespear goes on acquiring an encreasing reputation, instead of losing any thing of its first admiration.

LETTER LIV.

Clarges Street, *March* 31, 1770.

I FEEL unquiet, my dear Mrs. Vesey, at having longer than usual deferred thanking you for your Letter, but my unfortunate head has made me so indolent that it is with great reluctance I take up my pen; and it is much encreased by the utter incapacity I feel of writing any thing worth reading—But it is always worth an exertion to prevent the solicitude of an absent friend, and therefore, for fear you should think me worse than I really am, I am determined to defer writing no longer.

I am glad the drawing reached you in proper time, and answered your purpose. I know not of any

any drawing or print of Miss Finch in Miss Freame's possession. But however, you will probably soon have an opportunity of applying with a mighty good grace to herself, as the said Miss Freame is shortly to become your cousin, on which I congratulate you. Mr. Dawson's lot seems to be most singularly favourable in fixing on the person who of all others appears qualified to supply to him, so far as it possibly can be supplied, the distinguished excellence of that angel he has lost. If a high degree of good sense, the rightest principles, a fine imagination, an elegant taste, and great sweetness of temper can make him happy, I am persuaded he will find them all in Miss Freame. All the family in general, and Lady Louisa Clayton in particular, seems extremely well pleased with this event; she has been in town some time, and is very agreeably engaged in nursing her sweet little girl, who was born about three weeks ago.

Our dear Mrs. Montagu has been ill of her old complaint, but after a week's confinement is again moving in a gay circle, till exertion and over fatigue lays her up again; her strength is not equal to her spirits, and the continual round of dissipation she lives in; but it is in vain to talk to her, and one can only hope the summer quiet will give her strength for the next winter's campaign.

I rejoice

I rejoice in the prospect of seeing you in Bolton-row next January, when I hope I shall be more capable of enjoying your society, than I should have been in the dark months of this last melancholy winter. It is without any of the regret that one usually feels from the prospect of a general dispersion, that I see the season advancing that will consign me to the solitude and retirement, where I hope to regain that cheerfulness of spirits and capacity of being pleased and amused, which I find it so difficult ever to acquire in my present situation. By some means or other I have seen less this year than usual of the people whom I the most wish to see, except in general company: and the uninteresting scenes of mixed society have been insipid and tiresome to me to the highest degree. The conversation of a friend in every disposition does one good; but the heart must be perfectly at ease to enable one to receive any amusement from the general topics of the world. Yet do not imagine for this reason I shut myself up; for indeed I go on with my usual train de vie, am thankful whenever I can find my attention agreeably engaged, and contented with my ennui when I am not.

Mrs. J. Pitt and Mrs. Ch. Fielding have been with me this morning, and I have another Letter to write

write before I set out to Spring-gardens, where I am to dine, so I must conclude when I have sent my affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock, and told you a second edition of the Essay is printing.

LETTER LV.

Clarges Street, *April* 28, 1770.

It was exceedingly kind in you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to give me the pleasure of hearing from you so expeditiously, and my conscience will not be at rest till I have thanked you for it. I am much obliged to you for your anxiety about the effect which my solitude may have on my spirits, but I believe I may venture to assure you that it will be far from doing me any harm; indeed my own apprehension is, that I shall be less retired than I could wish, as there will be so much domestic business for me as must engage more of my time and thoughts than my inclination would chuse to allow them. My two damsels have behaved so wickedly during my absence, that no consideration of my own ease ought to prevent my parting with them;

them; and I am looking out for two others to supply their place, who know no one earthly thing but how to speak truth and do as they are bid. One such prize I have found, and am watching for another equally ignorant. So you may easily imagine I shall have too much employment, first in teaching myself, and next in teaching them the art and mystery of their business, to allow me to think of making any excursions this summer. I ought to feel the less reluctance at the task which lies before me, as I have so little power of application for any studies that would be more amusing; and I take pleasure in the thought of endeavouring at least to make two human creatures useful and happy, nor am I discouraged by any former want of success; the trial is always a duty, and with success I have nothing to do.

I cannot give you any very new intelligence of Mrs. Ann Pitt, as I have not seen her lately. I passed an evening with her tête-à-tête some time ago in town, and have since spent a day with her at Knightsbridge; she then looked better than I had seen her, but her appearance is so much altered that it would strike you greatly. In general her health is, I fear, in an uncomfortable way. It must give you pleasure to feel the return of your natural disposition towards her. I hope she is in no danger; but even if she was, any pain which

you might suffer for her loss would be softened by the consciousness of having, before it was too late, felt those kind and friendly affections, which I believe every good mind will think, in whatever state of alienation those with whom we have been once connected leave the world, to have been always their due, the moment that all possibility is lost of their offending no more.

I am sure you was greatly shocked at the death of poor Miss Luttrel after so short an illness. There is something very striking in the reflections, which arise on considering the tumultuous feelings of a human soul, which finds itself hurrying away from the warm pursuits of gay unthinking life into the cold air and solitary abode of the grave, where it discovers nothing congenial to its own happiness. In the exercise of intellectual talents, in the friendly and virtuous affections of the heart, in the sublimed and noble amusements of delicate and refined imagination, the mind looks forward with a cheerful expectation that every object of reasonable pleasure will subsist through every change of existence. But when death once drops the curtain on the harlequin farce of versatile unmeaning folly, all hope of any future representation is for ever lost.

You would have had this Letter some days sooner, but an attack of feverish head-ache has absolutely disqualified me for writing. I am better to-day,

to-day, and hope to have finished before Mrs. Montagu calls for me, as we are going to dine with Mrs. Pulteney. I have told Mrs. Montagu your pathetic lamentations on her silence, to which I hope she will pay due attention; but indeed between company and Letters of business, she is extremely harassed. I hope before this reaches you Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar will be safely arrived. I rejoice in this favourable wind and fine weather, which will waft them over to-day. Mrs. J. Pitt is very well; she and I have formed a delectable scheme of visiting some of the venerable remains of ancient magnificence in London. Pendez vous, ma chêre amie, car voila des spectacles, et vous n'y serez pas *. Adieu! Heaven bless you, and let me hear from you soon.

* Probably alluding to the well-known Letter of Henry IV. of France to the brave Grillon, "Pends toi, brave Grillon, nous avons combattus a Arques, & tû n'y etois pas."

LETTER LVI.

Deal, *July* 21, 1770.

THOUGH I painfully feel and lament my own inactivity, do not allege it as an excuse for your silence, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that you find that for any considerable time it ever prevents my writing to you. I heartily grieve to find you have suffered so much from your apprehensions about dear good Mrs. Handcock, though I hope they arose more from the quick alarm to which every strong affection is so liable, than from any real danger of those consequences which presented themselves to your imagination. When your spirits have recovered their late attack, I hope you will be able to consider Mrs. Handcock's illness as a terror that is past, and not, as you seem to do, as a *particular* warning of any thing future. The very condition of mortality, indeed is a general warning against any absolute security in any enjoyment liable to the hourly deprivations of a changing world. But while the blessings which are allotted us carry no apparent symptoms of danger, it is certainly both our interest and our duty to enjoy them with cheerfulness and gratitude, and submit their continuance to the

decision of Heaven, instead of forming any painful conjectures about it from our own visionary imaginations. It is surely strongly and unnecessarily tormenting ourselves to cloud the lustre and disturb the enjoyment of an actual fine day by conjuring up the ideal horrors of a storm.

I am vexed and disappointed to find you have seen so little of Lady Dartrey, as I had set my heart on your becoming acquainted with a character, which to be esteemed and loved needs only to be known.

With regard to the hurrying departure which you mention, I am perfectly persuaded that the person in question has not the least terror of any *apparition*, and that the circumstance you regret has no other foundation than merely the natural restlessness of an unhappy nervous constitution.

Our dear Mrs. Montagu is got into Northumberland after a wet unpleasant journey, during which she was not at all well, from some return of her bilious disorder. It was happy she had this attack while she was at Hagley, and not at an inn. She writes me word she is now well. Mrs. Chapone is with her, at which I am much pleased, for with her uncertain health it would be excessively uncomfortable to be at such a distance without a friend.

If it is the head-ache that has preserved me from the love of *things*, my friends, so far as they can find me of any consequence, have reason to think themselves obliged to it, as it gives them so undivided a possession of my heart. Perhaps too I may claim some little merit with them for not regretting my unsophisticated attachment to them, in spite of what I must sometimes feel in not conversing with the world upon equal terms.

You rejoice me by your intelligence that Mr. Dunbar is not likely to pass any considerable part of his time in Ireland. Fye upon you for whistling and singing our dear Mrs. Dunbar, and perhaps yourself, into a cold! There has been scarcely a day in this country fit for such a station as you describe. It is true the sun is high and the trees are green, but the air is chilling and ungenial, and there is nothing like the feeling of summer. As to your enquiries of how I do? and what I think? I do like any one who every day feels increasing symptoms of the depredations of time on a shattered machine; and I endeavour to think such thoughts as befit such a discovery *. Adieu, my dear Mrs.

* Curantem quicquid dignum sapiente bonoq: est.
HOR.

For the reply of Isocrates to the same question see Letter XXI.

Vesey. I hope you threw in something like a doubt about your coming to England, merely to quicken my wishes, which was by no means necessary. My affectionate love and best wishes of a speedy and perfect recovery to Mrs. Handcock.

LETTER LVII.

Deal, *Sept.* 10, 1770.

As the gentle Naiads seem so much more congenial to your constitution, my dear Mrs. Vesey, than the boisterous Cyclops, I hope your recourse to their stream will be attended with success, and confute the reasonings of the doctor. Indeed it grieves me to find that your anxiety for Mrs. Handcock was no sooner over than you was attacked by a pain of your own. But such are the chances of this "work-a-day world!" We often feel that health which we cannot enjoy from our co n for those we love; on the other hand, as our heart is at ease for others, we are ed, perhaps, by some painful attention elves. Thus passes life in an alterna-

tion of private and of social suffering; and yet so wonderful and so merciful is the composition of our existence, that innumerable pleasures find a place amidst the evils of mortality, and, upon the whole, we suffer only just enough to reconcile us to the limits of our present duration, and to extend our views to futurity.

How much do I feel myself obliged to you for wishing so kindly that I might share your charming morning scene of the river; yet I think I would rather choose to meet you in the more solemn retreat, where the moonlight gleams through the gothic window. I hope you will transport yourself on one of the beams to return my visit on the sea-shore, where the moon forms a scene equally solemn, though in a different style, and I believe you would find the soft murmurs of the ebbing waves as musically soothing as the whispers of your trees. I was heartily sorry for what you must feel from the apprehensions of losing so suddenly any person of whom you speak with so much kindness and affection; I hope, however, the favourable alteration continued, and that by this time the danger is past.

Miss Finch desires her best compliments, and thanks for your kind enquiries. Lady Charlotte brought her hither about a month ago to bathe in the

the sea for a weakness of nerves, which has probably been rendered worse by the very long and fatiguing walks she took when she was abroad. Lady Charlotte staid here about ten days, and then left this dear deposit to my charge. I flatter myself she is better than when she came, and, I thank God, there are no symptoms of that disorder which has been so fatal in the family. As well from my own inclination, as from my promise to Lady Charlotte, I give up my whole time and attention to her, and shall think myself extremely happy if I can be in any degree useful to her. But alas, my dear friend, how painfully does one feel the conviction of human weakness under the sad experience how very little our utmost endeavours can contribute to remove the sufferings of those for whom we are the most tenderly interested, yet the little we can do ought diligently and thankfully to be done, and the success submitted to Him in whose power alone are the sources of comfort and of happiness to ourselves and all we love.—Miss Finch is to remain here a fortnight longer. Lord Winchelsea is at present at Deal, for the sake of being with his sister. He appears to be a most amiable young man; his manners are extremely engaging, and there is the utmost propriety in his behaviour, without the least mixture of pertness or affectation whatever,

ever, and I hope he will do the same honour as all the other branches of the family to the Fermor school.

Adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey; this has been writ à plusieures reprises, but I was determined to write as soon as I could, and leave you to draw the inference. The last Letter I had from Mrs. Montagu gave a very good account of her health, but no determination about when she should travel southward.

LETTER LVIII.

Tunstal, *May* 29, 1771.

You desired to hear from me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, before I reached the end of my journey, and it is not an aching head that shall prevent my attempting it. I got hither to tea yesterday afternoon, and found my sister and family very well and in good spirits, which was a great happiness to me, and the only circumstance that can render this place even tolerably agreeable to me, which in itself

self I sufficiently dislike. Though the weather is close and hot within doors, there is nothing like the balmy airs of summer without, but a chill ungenial blast that shakes the blue fogs from the trees, and seems to scatter agues over the face of the country. If it was my destination to live in this place, it would be my business to set about investigating all its advantages; but as happily I am not, this would be an unnecessary trouble to a passenger, and so I content myself with feeling very thankful for a purer air and more agreeable situation at home, where I may sit and think without interruption of the dear friends from whom I have just parted.

I was extremely fatigued yesterday by the dust, which I should think it shameful to complain of merely as an inconvenience, if it did not always make me really so ill as to deprive me of the enjoyment of the beautiful prospects on the road, and every other advantage of the country. This incapacity is particularly vexatious at a time when one would wish to have the quickest feeling of every pleasing circumstance of the situation on which one is entering, as a compensation for the loss of that which one has just left. It is no doubt a very reasonable wish that the whole creation should contribute to our amusement, and neither moral nor physical impediment ever stand in the way of our perfectly

perfectly enjoying at one season the conversation of our friends, and at another the song of the nightingales and the bloom of roses; and thus one pleasure be immediately replaced by another. A fine system this, and a state of trial extremely well adapted to the undeviating rectitude of such beings as the race of Adam! After all, we must be contented to take things as they are; and it is from our own folly if they are not mighty well. The whole secret consists in connecting one part of our existence with the other, and supplying present deficiencies by future hopes. Under any teizing incapacity of enjoying the fairest season, the most enchanting landscapes, and the gayest music upon earth, it is only looking forward to the walks of Paradise, where no head-ache will interrupt our attention to their beauties. And the best consolation in parting with our friends is to anticipate the society of Paradise, in which there will be no more separation.

I had the happiness of a Note from Mrs. Montagu just before I left London, in which she informs me of her having been perfectly well ever since she left town. I hope you will be able to contrive your affairs so as to go to Tunbridge, as I am persuaded the waters will do you good. Do pray tell me very soon how you do, and send me an account of all the rareee-shows, and all the playthings,

playthings, and all the playfellows you have picked up since I saw you. I propose being at Deal on Friday evening.

LETTER LIX.

Deal, *June* 13, 1771.

By all means, my dear Mrs. Vesey, leave Dr. James to swallow his own powders, and Mr. Vesey to squabble with his two old gentlemen, and do you get as fast as you can to Tunbridge. If you do not find health in the spring, you will at least acquire good spirits from the society. But indeed I do think you will be the better both from the water and the air. At least you must be the worse for continuing any longer in the heat and suffocation of London. I hoped you had been at Lady Primrose's, disporting yourself on the banks of the Thames, and not stifled between brick walls in London. I am obliged to you for confirming all the good accounts of our friends at Tunbridge, not that

that I am bribed by it to think it a sufficient excuse for your not writing to me before.

Do not reproach me with being glad to get out of town, for however that might be, I certainly was sorry to leave you, especially at a time when I might hope to see more of you than the innumerable claims your other friends had on you would allow me to do in the winter. But indeed it was proper for me to return home. I have passed my time in solitary tranquillity ever since I have been here, as my father is not yet returned; so after the first bustle of arranging my apartment and settling the family was over, I have been for most part of the day in absolute silence and quiet.

You do not mention whether Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar are to spend any time at Tunbridge, nor does she mention it herself. I find Mrs. Montagu leads a very quiet life there, never mixes in society but when she is drinking the waters. I am persuaded this circumstance will greatly contribute to her recovery, as I am certain the fatigue of constant exertion, and being in a succession of company, very much increased, if it was not the original cause of, her illness. Your going to her will give a gaiety to her spirits, and form such a degree of society as without fatigue will prevent her from feeling too much solitude. But do not seduce her into any of your lively schemes of being diverted to death,

for

for I am not sure that she may be so absolutely proof against your enchantments, as I was when I gained that memorable victory, which prevented you from carrying me to every place you had ever heard of in England or Wales, in the space of time barely necessary to convey any mere mortal gentlewoman from London to Old Windsor, to dine with good Lady Primrose.

I do not by these wise injunctions wish to restrain your own flights at Tunbridge, for I believe they do you a great deal of good, and most heartily shall I rejoice to hear of any thing that does you good, for I cannot say I am much pleased with your account of yourself. Why will good Mrs. Handcock persist in making you take medicines that seem so totally to disagree with you? But perhaps, poor soul, I accuse her wrongfully, and she cannot help your taking them; for I know, when you please, you are very refractory. Pray be good, and do as you ought, and let me hear a better account of your proceedings, and let the next Letter be from Tunbridge. When you write to Mr. Vesey, I beg you will recommend his bringing his two old gentlemen to England, in hopes they may be as dilatory here as they have been in Ireland, and that I think will secure my seeing you next winter.

LETTER LX.

Deal, *July* 26, 1771.

THOUGH I am always very ready, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to admit an *honest* excuse, I have so very little toleration for an *ingenious* one, that I was much less satisfied with the reason which you gave for not writing from Tunbridge, than if you had left me to form some candid allowance of my own. I am heartily rejoiced at last to hear that the Sunning-hill waters agree with you, and if you find the good effect continue, pray do give them fair play, and do not hurry back so as to lose the benefit of the time which you have already bestowed on them. A month or six weeks can make no great difference in your return to Ireland, where, alas, you are to remain so long, and may make a very important one in the establishment of your health.

It is scarcely possible, I should suppose, that you can have resisted the temptation of the great spectacle in your neighbourhood; at least I think, in the same situation, I could not. Yet perhaps I might have been disappointed in the expectation of realizing my ideas of gothic grandeur and solemnity,

nity, as too probably the whole show will be influenced by the genius of modern taste, which has substituted the tinsel of finery and the whims of fancy, for the noble ornaments of magnificence, and the solemn and sublime enchantments of imagination.

I am happy to hear on all hands the good account of Mrs. Montagu's health. If she can but acquire virtue enough to act when she is well to a certain degree as if she were sick, it may be hoped that the present amendment may be lasting; but if her genius is resolved to live up to the height of her constitution, like all other prodigals, it will soon run beyond it. I heartily grieve to think that Lady Dartrey has not received that benefit from Tunbridge which for some time it seemed to promise. She has been very ill. She very kindly wrote to me as soon as she got to London, to prevent my being alarmed by hearing a worse account of her illness from somebody else. Till this Post I have not been well enough to thank her for this kind attention. This too has prevented my writing to you as soon as I wished, and much sooner than you deserved; however, I think you will hardly have left Old Windsor before this reaches you, which conveys to you my good wishes for a pleasant journey, a safe voyage, and every other good circumstance that can contribute to your comfort and happiness.

If

If you have the least glimpse of a prospect of coming to England next spring, I feel sure you will not refuse me the pleasure of communicating it.

Lady Ancram and Mrs. Crofton have been some time at Deal, and have been so good as to call on me pretty often. As Mrs. Crofton and I were sitting in my room on Tuesday, there was a tap at the door, and it immediately opened. As we are equally short-sighted, neither could discover who this visitor was, and after talking her over all the while she was walking up the room, by the time she arrived within an inch of our eyes, we discovered it to be Mrs. Dunbar. Only think how I rejoiced at this unexpected vision: it was too transient, for her abode is at Margate, where Mr. Dunbar has taken a house for the benefit of sea-bathing. They both looked well and in spirits, and have promised to come to Deal again.

Be so good as to present my compliments to Lady Primrose. I am very glad to hear she is at least tolerably well, which it is to be feared is all that can be expected from such an invalid constitution as her's. Adieu, dear Mrs. Vesey. One proof of my love, amongst many others, is, my writing to you when I can scarce see a letter or understand a word I write.

LETTER LXI.

Deal, *Aug.* 30, 1771.

ARE not you the finest of fine ladies, to make engagements with people one day, and forget both engagements and people the next? You bid me write to you on the road, and commit my Letter to the care of Mrs. Dunbar, who would know how to convey it to you. You will see by the enclosed that I most dutifully obeyed you; but when I mentioned it to Mrs. Dunbar, to my utter astonishment she told me you had not mentioned a word about it, nor did she know any more than I where you was to be found; and so my poor Letter has been shut up closely ever since, waiting when you would give a signification for its enlargement, which did not arrive till yesterday.

I leave Mrs. Dunbar to give you an account how well she is pleased with this country, and I hope it will be such a one as will make you half wild to see it. You know her too well to need any account from me how happy I am in her being here. Adieu! Pray think with due compunction of your tricks, and let me hear from you very soon; you promised to write to me on the road, but not a line

a line have I received since you left Old Windsor. I long to know where you are, and what you are doing, and where you have been; mind and answer all these questions as an atonement for your past faults.

ENCLOSED IN THE FORMER.

LETTER LXII.

Deal, *Aug.* 20, 1771.

I READ your Letter last night, my dear Mrs. Vesey, by the soft melancholy light of this fair autumnal moon, as I was sitting on the sea-shore, soothed by the lulling murmur of the ebbing waves. The stillness of the unruffled ocean, and the solemn scenery formed by a shadowy illumination, had composed my mind into that pensive kind of tranquillity which has such an inexplicable union with the tenderest feelings of the heart. In such a disposition, only guess in what manner I must have been affected by your Letter, the farewell for an absence of so many long months! Indeed it was too much for my spirits, and I will not attempt to

describe what I felt. When we parted in town you were certainly as effectually out of my reach, and I had as little prospect of seeing you before the year 1773, as when you was preparing to cross St. George's Channel: yet, all the while I knew you to be in England, I did not feel your absence as a separation, in the manner as it strikes me now. Yet days, and weeks, and months are things of limited duration, and the period will come back, I trust, which will restore you to the society of your friends on this side the water; so let us pass the intermediate time with the cheerful hope of meeting again, and with the spirited hope of returning, after every separation, wiser and better to each other, and with improving prospects of that meeting which will not be embittered with the thoughts of any future separation.

The last Letter I received from you was dated July 19: I answered it as usual, and heard no more of you till your's yesterday from Shrewsbury. If there was any other left for me at Windsor, do write and enquire for it, for I really cannot submit to the loss of it, and I dare say it is reposing very quietly in the pocket of some of Lady Primrose's servants.

I know Mrs. Handcock never writes, therefore her silence was no mark of oblivion, and from the nature of *her* disposition I was very sure she had not

not forgot me. Now you do sometimes write: and therefore, whenever you do not, I have a right to conclude, from the nature of *your* disposition, that you are too much engaged by *things*, to find yourself at leisure to think of *people:* and therefore probably had forgot me. If I could transport myself on some moonlight evening to partake your reveries at Lucan, you would be very certain of having me very soon at your elbow: but I do not find so strong a temptation in the thought of making one in so numerous a party.

I had several times the pleasure of seeing Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar while they were at Margate, and spent two days with them. I never saw them in better health or spirits: they went away sooner than they wished, to see after a house near town, which they seemed to think they should hire. I have not heard from Mrs. Montagu this age; but I begged her not to write till she had done rambling. Mrs. Crofton is still here, and desires her compliments; she is so good as to call often upon me, and means to continue some time longer at this place, which is a great pleasure to me.

As Mrs. Henry accompanies you in your departure from us, I hope she will likewise accompany your return; though she did not give me all the encouragement to expect her again as I could have wished. Never was there, I believe, a more per-

fect integrity, nor a warmer spirit of benevolence in any character than her's, nor guided by more excellent principles. I hope soon to hear from one or both of you, that you are safely landed. I am happy that there has not been one stormy day since the date of your last. Adieu! blessings attend you.

LETTER LXIII.

Deal, *Oct.* 10, 1771.

It very seldom happens, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that I suffer a fortnight to pass between a Letter from you, and my thanks for it. But indeed ever since I received the welcome account of your being safely landed, my head-aches have been so frequent and so violent, and consequently the languor which succeeded them, has been so oppressive as to have most totally disqualified me for any degree of application; this must plead my excuse, and I am sure your affection for me will allow it to be a sufficient one.

You are equally true to your particularities I find on each side the water, and while you regret

"Poets,

" Poets, Statesmen, Players, Geniuses, and Scholars," it proves your attachment not to *people* but to *things*, for what is all this but mere drapery and ornament! I do not pretend to determine for the others, contained in your catalogue: but I insist on having justice done to myself, and therefore I beg that you will certify in your next Letter, that so far as I have a share in your regrets, and a share I am vain enough to think I have, you will regret me, Elizabeth Carter, stript to the naked heart, and under the appearance of a faithful and most affectionate friend. When you have once fully settled your estimation of this point, I will not quarrel with you for any interior degree of value which you may set on the mere external trappings, with which your imagination will find a pleasure in decorating me.

I believe I anticipated your kind appointment of meeting me on a soft moonlight night, in my answer to your's from Shrewsbury. We have had no soft moonlight scenes since that time, but continual storms, which have made me feel very happy in the thought that my friends were safely landed. These last violent commotions of the elements would have afforded a noble entertainment to my imagination, if they did not unfortunately so wretchedly affect my health as to confine me to the imperfect enjoyment of them in my own room, when I could have wished to be in the midst of the tempest.

pest. This is the more vexatious, as it is an entertainment entirely calculated for our sublunary world. Beyond the stars all is serene and calm; I do not, however, think it necessary to suppose that the kind of feeling which the soul experiences from such objects will ever be lost, however the objects themselves may vary. Perhaps the gayest flower of Paradise may give the enlightened faculties of the soul, as strong an impression of the sublime, and as awful a sense of divine power, as strikes our present composition in the contemplation of a thundering sky, or a stormy ocean. No one object of creation is greater or less than another, considered with reference to the supreme mind, the original author of all. The difference arises merely from our situation. In a state of perpetual dangers, of insecure enjoyments, we are apt to confine our ideas of the exertions of greatness and power to objects of terror that threaten us with some sudden alteration: In a happier state of being, where our venture may be trusted without any assistance from our fears, we shall probably feel nothing so strongly as the sublime of good.

My love to dear Mrs. Handcock, and a thousand thanks for the kindness with which you describe her preparing a room—which alas I much fear, I shall never inhabit, unless it should happen when I am as free from mortal incumbrances as

your

your Prior. Indeed however strong my temptations, and they are I assure you very strong, to visit Lucan, my kind of health renders me so unfit for travelling, unless I could travel by myself, that I should be quite a dead weight upon the party, and I cannot think of rendering myself so troublesome and disagreeable a companion: to say nothing of any other reason against a scheme, which in itself would be so very delightful to me.

I am sorry to find that the house Mr. Dunbar left this country in such haste to look at, does not answer, nor any of the many they have seen since: Mrs. Dunbar is so excessively fond of the country, and has so true a taste for its enjoyments, that almost any cottage would be an acquisition to her. The comfort however is, that the want of it is not capable of disturbing the unruffled tranquillity of her mind. You ask me how I like Mrs. Crofton: well enough to be extremely scandalized at my not owing her acquaintance to you. Do pray say something in justification of yourself for this omission. I had a Letter last Post from Mrs. Montagu whose health, thank God, retains all the advantages she received from Tunbridge.

Adieu! my dear Mrs. Vesey, this day has restored the sun, and promises fair for the approaching moon. Remember your appointment; I will

meet

meet you on the sea shore, though I do not propose to indulge your love for adventures, by running the hazard of my neck on the edge of a cliff. When you see Mrs. Henry, give my love to her, and say I hope she has received my Letter. Write to me soon, and love me always.

LETTER LXIV.

Deal, *Nov.* 21, 1771.

Our Correspondence would have gone on in its irregular track, my dear Mrs. Vesey, if my perverse head would have seconded the inclinations of my heart, and allowed me to thank you for your first Letter before I received the last, which arrived last night. But indeed I have so seldom had an hour in which I could write with any tolerable ease, that I was always glad to lay hold on an any excuse, to avoid setting about it, and so loitered on in the hope which you have kindly accomplished, of hearing from you again.

I entirely agree with you, that the "natural ties are not loosened by age, except in those who never

never loved much." It is not to these that ambition and avarice succeed, but to the other mere earthly passions which are perpetually changing their appearance, " stained with the variation of each soil," in passing through the several stages of a shifting mortal constitution. The virtuous affections of the heart are founded on unchanging principles, and instead of growing weaker, become more generous, tender, and refined, in proportion as they approach nearer to that period when they shall be purified from all mixture of human frailty, and exalted to their highest perfection.

I am happy in being admitted to a share in your twilight reveries. I should be most happy in the hope that the many conversations we have had on the most important subjects, always found a place there.—I kept my appointment most faithfully of meeting you on the sea shore the last moonlight nights. It did me inexpressible good, I hope you shared it?

Your dream was as well connected as if you had formed it wide awake. You best know how, for it deserves attention as a monition. In general no doubt the best relief to the poor is from supplying their wants by the means of their own honest labour: and therefore your plans in the cabriole are not to be ranked among the vices of useless luxury. They only become so, I apprehend, when by too great

great an expence in employing those who *can* work, there is not enough reserved for the relief of those who from various innocent inabilities *cannot* —It must be confessed there will always be a danger of mistake, wherever the benefit arising to others is interwoven with the indulgence of our own fancies; and perhaps the only secure way of avoiding it, is by a regular appropriation of all the several articles of expence. In this view it must be very pleasant to find that what is merely set down as a gratification of taste becomes in its consequences a work of charity, without encroaching upon the rights of what is such in its orginal principle.—With all your dreaming, perhaps you did not dream that your lively agreeable vision would produce such a grave moral dissertation. But you threw it in my way, and I could not help taking it up.

Indeed, (to come to your second Letter) I did not mean to hurt you by any flippant remarks in in my last about *people* and *things*, for I really meant nothing but what I have laughed at, and you with me, an hundred times before. I agree to your proposal of keeping my head and heart together: for they are truly so strongly complicated with each other, that it would be very difficult to get them asunder. Indeed you pay me much too high a compliment in accusing me of the defection

of

of your country women. I scarce ever met with an Irish woman in my life, who did not in a very kindly manner take root and flourish in the soil of England. We are much obliged to you all for this partiality, for you have among you imported more sense and virtue than I fear we are likely to repay you, by all the hungry people whom we send to eat you up from thence.

Mrs. Montagu assures me she would write to you by the Post that brought mine, by this therefore your mind must be at rest about her. Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar have been at Bath, but are I fancy returned. Mrs. Pitt and all her family are well at Encombe, from which they do not propose to remove till after Christmas. Lady Dartrey's health is greatly improved by Bristol. I have heard nothing of Lady Primrose or Miss Cooper. As for myself I cannot answer your kind wishes with respect to my health, this fine weather ought to do me good, but indeed I am very little capable of enjoying it; frequent attacks of feverishness very much incapacitate me for walking.

My sister Pennington and all her family have been with us for the last ten days, which occasions many family meetings, from which my health often excludes me. They are all gone out on a party this afternoon, from which, as it is at some distance, I do not expect them to return till after

midnight. My father is gone amongst the rest. What a blessing to his family, that he can undertake such a scheme at 84; which he completed the tenth of this month. I have certainly at least as much happiness in sitting at home with this reflection, as if I had been able to make one of the party. I beg my affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock. I wish I could convert your tête-à-tête at Lucan into a trio. As I cannot, I heartily wish you both the fullest enjoyment of so delightful a retirement. Adieu, dear Mrs. Vesey; I propose to leave Deal, if it please God I live and prosper, a very few days after Christmas. I hope you will let me hear from you before I set out. Every happiness attend you!

LETTER LXV.

Clarges Street, *Feb.* 7, 1772.

Though I was hurt, and disappointed, and half angry, at not hearing from you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, before I left the country, I should not

not have deferred writing to you for so long had I not been more than usually ill for the last ten days I was at Deal; I went out indeed every day, as I had my reasons for not choosing to appear as ill as I was; but to enable me to do that I was obliged to keep myself absolutely quiet and often on my pillow for the whole morning. I am at present, I thank God, returned to my usual state, and though my head is still very untoward I will no longer defer my visit to you, for fear, as your ideas are apt to travel pretty fast towards the conclusion of things, you should from so uncommon a silence imagine me to be dead, and put yourself to the expence of having a lamentation sung over me in an Irish howl. This, however, if it was necessary, ought in all reason to be done at the public charge, as I seem, more than any English woman ever did, to belong to the whole kingdom of Ireland: I find myself growing more and more Irish every winter of my life.

I congratulate you on the elevated situation of your dressing-room, which exalts you above the fogs of Dublin, and sets your imagination at liberty to expatiate in the regions of pure æther. I confess you to be in this, as well as in many other instances, much more ingenious than I, who should find it impossible in the midst of a great city, to divest myself of the unlucky idea of brick

houses

houses and smoking chimneys: and I must raise my turret within reach of the moon at least, before I could fairly lose sight of these vulgar terrestrial objects which, I think, would not be very effectually banished by an hospital full in my view. I delight, however, in the transformation of the weathercock, which in your exalted station appears in its genuine shape of a *caudle*, while to the gazing spectators below, I am credibly informed it wears no other figure than that of a ragged flag. However, as there is such a natural relation between a lying-in-hospital and a caudle, I am persuaded you see it in its true form. My only difficulty is, that though I believe a caudle may be a mighty good thing to drink, I do not well see how it can conveniently serve for a weather-cock, and help to shew one in what quarter the wind is. I depend on your next Letter for clearing up this point entirely to my satisfaction, and enabling me to confute Lady Bingham's scandal about the flag. I had the pleasure of meeting her last week at Mrs. Hamilton's, where I dined with her and Mrs. Crofton. I heartily wished you and Mrs. Handcock could have shared in this very pleasant day, instead of merely contributing to the entertainment of it, for you both engaged good part of our conversation. Miss Cooper * is not yet come to

* Afterwards wife of Mr. De Luc, the celebrated geogolist.

town,

town, but is disporting herself in the snow at Bromley. I have made frequent enquiries after her, and am disappointed to find that nobody seems to guess when she will come.

I often call on Lady Primrose, who always receives me very kindly, and professes a great regard for me because I love you. I dined with her last week, and she was so good as to carry me to St. James's chapel, in the afternoon. I have likewise spent two evenings tête-à-tête with her. Her health is sometimes better, sometimes worse. Upon the whole I think much as usual: and she looks full as well as she did last year. All our friends are well. Lady Dartrey looking better than I ever remember her, and continually going on in the path of her angelic predecessor*. Mrs. Dunbar and Mrs. J. Pitt in very lively health; I am to to dine with the latter on Thursday next. How we shall talk about you, and wish for you! Mrs. A. Pitt has lately exhibited a very elegant ball, I must refer you for particulars to Mrs. Montagu, who was there. I was sadly disappointed in Mrs. Montagu's looks, which I do not find improved to the degree which I had been taught to expect; however, I thank God, she is in reality better than she has been for years: and she is upon the whole

* Lady Ann Dawson.

tolerably

tolerably sober this winter. I dined there on Monday with a party which you would have highly enjoyed, Lord and Lady Nuneham, Lord Lyttelton (to whom en passant, I have delivered all your messages) and Mr. and Mrs. T. Pitt *. It was an easy agreeable day, and the number so limitted that the conversation was not split into separate parties. Miss Finch is soon to be married to Capt. C. Feilding. Lady Charlotte has smoothed all difficulties in the way of their union, and behaved on this occasion as she does on every other, with the most amiable goodness.

With all your wicked reproaches, if you do but answer my Letters, as quickly as I do your's, I shall be contented. I scarcely ever defer writing above a week, and I had your last Letter only on Friday. O dear, I have not told you into what a mortal fright I was put, by the reason you assign for your first inclination to be acquainted with me: whereas I all the while, thinking no harm, hoped that you would love me, because I was diffident and quiet, and tagged after you like a tame kitten from one chair to another, whenever you thought fit to change your place fifteen times in a quarter of an hour. I know not how I should have had courage enough to converse with you again, if you had not reco-

* Afterwards Lord and Lady Camelford.

vered

vered my spirits, by saying you would continue to love me if you found your original expectations ever so much frustrated.

If you have such a longing desire to send me a gown, I am told that either muslin or stuff may be very legally conveyed, if it is made up. So if Mrs. Handcock will be so good as to be my representative and have it fitted to her, I will be obliged to you for your kind attention to the decoration of my figure; and am quite indifferent whether it be muslin or stuff. I have writ myself downright sick, so my dear Mrs. Vesey, adieu. You can have no idea how much I long for you in Bolton Row.

LETTER LXVI.

Clarges Street, *Feb.* 28, 1772.

Do not be disheartened, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I shall continue, I will not say as civil, but as just as ever, to a pen from which I receive so much pleasure. To tell the honest truth, it was not from mistake, but from mere flippancy that I

turned your *cradle*, which I could read perfectly well, into a *caudle*, as it would make the more singular weathercock of the two, and it was as easy to form the one out of a ragged flag, as the other. You have effectually punished me for this idle trick, by writing me so short a Letter, for which however I am determined to thank you as quick as possible, in hopes of making my peace.

I have very little intelligence to send you from Denmark, as there is a profound silence at St. James's on that subject. You know that the unhappy young Queen is imprisoned in a castle dashed by the waves, where she is kept in very strict confinement. I am persuaded you would think it an alleviation of her misfortunes, if I could tell you, it is the very castle once haunted by Hamlet's ghost: but of this I have no positive assurance; though, as it is at Elsineur, I think such an imagination as your's and mine, may fairly enough make out the rest. In the Letter which the King of Denmark wrote to our's, he only mentioned in general, that the Queen had behaved in a manner which obliged him to imprison her, but that from regard to his Majesty her life should be safe. There was a Letter in almost the same words to the Princess Dowager of Wales, to whom this sad affair is supposed to have given the coup de grace. It is remarkable that during her whole illness, she never

discovered

discovered to any of the family, not even to the Princess of Brunswick, who was constantly with her, that she had any apprehensions of her own danger. The only hint she gave of it, was a very short time before her death, by asking her physician how long he thought she could live. On finding him hesitate, she said it was no matter, for "she had nothing to say, nothing to do, and nothing to leave." This last circumstance is very true, and surely greatly to her honour. I was at the funeral.—It did not answer all that you would imagine of so awful a scene, but however I found that upon the whole it fully repaid any trouble that it cost me to get there: our party consisted of Mrs. J. Pitt and William, Mrs. Crofton, Miss H. Finch, and four or five more whom I believe you do not know. The melancholy music of the fifes and muffled drums, which played a dead march, interrupted by regular pauses, while the procession was advancing along the body of the church, was solemn and affecting to an inexpressible degree. On entering the chapel the order of the procession was entirely broken, and all thrown into confusion, by mixing with the crowd of spectators with which the middle of the chapel was filled. The parts of the service which are so extremely fine when well chanted, were so ill-performed as to make nothing but discord. But when the Dean began to read

the prayers, which he pronounced very distinctly and well, the deep silence and attention of so vast a multitude, all drest in the same mournful uniform, was very striking. The Herald ranging and proclaiming the Peers and Peeresses after the service was over, too much resembled a trifling epilogue to an affecting tragedy.

It is a strange transition from the solemn arches of Westminster Abbey, to the gay rotunda of the Pantheon, but as it is a fashionable thing, perhaps you will expect me to say something about it. Indeed I can say but little about it, for though I was there one evening I stayed but an hour, and found that sufficient pour m'ennuyer. The architecture is, I believe, very fine: and it is, perhaps, the single instance in Europe of so large a building finished in all the nicety of a papier maché snuff-box. This mixture of great and little makes a confusion in one's ideas, and is, I think, by no means advantageous. You would, I think, be pleased with the appearance of the dome. It is lighted by invisible lamps which diffuse a general illumination, very soft and pleasing.—In short it is an Arabian tale, or a fairy vision.

Mrs. Montagu and all our friends continue, I thank God, very well. I saw Lady Primrose very lately, and think she looks better than she did. Miss Cooper is come to town, and I hope to meet her

her this evening at Mrs. Dunbar's. She has called twice, and I mean to go to her this morning, if my head does not send me to my pillow, which it seems very likely to do.—And so it did, and obliged me to defer seeing Miss Cooper till I met her in the evening at Mrs. Dunbar's, where several of our friends were assembled together; why could not you complete the number? I am told there is some prospect of your coming to London this spring in your way to Spa. If it was likely to be before my return into the country, I shall have an outrageous quarrel against you, for not giving me the pleasure of receiving such delightful intelligence from yourself.

Pray do you remember your promise to me of Mrs. Dunbar's picture? I am too sure I shall never get it from herself. Consider, it was not you who procured me the original, therefore it is the more incumbent on you to supply me with the copy. I acknowledge at the same time, with great gratitude, that I owe you Mrs. J. Pitt. You would be happy to see how healthy and blooming she looks this year. Adieu, my head is all confusion.

LETTER LXVII.

Clarges Street, *April* 17, 1772.

MANY a time have I intended to thank you for your Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, but always found myself either too ill or too well. In the first case I was not able to write, and in the other I had set myself a task which appeared of more consequence than the mere indulgence of my own inclinations, and so I have deferred writing till now, when I am neither positively sick nor well, nor idle nor busy. It cannot be said that I have for some time been much engaged by the hurry of social parties, for the accident of some little children being taken with the small-pox in the second floor of this house, has excluded me from almost all my friends, and I am in a state of quarantine. Mrs. Montagu wanted me to change my lodging, but it would have been too great an undertaking for my ineffective kind of health to quit a place where I have resided so many winters, and where I have all my conveniencies about me. When people have had the long struggle of more than half a century, like me, with an untoward constitution, they find at last that a temporary suspension of pleasure, is

a less

a less evil than an addition of pain. So I have quietly submitted to this long exile, and stifled all my sentiments and longings as well as I could; and by this means have kept myself in a state of tolerable tranquillity, though I have been deprived of more vivid enjoyments. I know that you who think tranquillity and dullness so nearly allied, will pity my situation extremely; and indeed it is by no means the situation I should have wished, but I have made the best of it I could. Miss Cooper has been very good to me in my solitary state; I have had the pleasure of seeing her almost every day; luckily for me she lodges in Half-moon Street. Mrs. Talbot has no fears about the small-pox, so I go to her as often as usual, and might go oftener if I would. As the last child who had the distemper has taken physic and has been out, I suppose my interdict will soon be taken off: but the proposal shall not come from me, for I would not wish to see any of my friends an hour sooner than they can think it would be perfectly safe: especially as the small-pox, both by inoculation and the natural way, is very much in the town at present. Miss Pulteney* is in a state of inoculation at present, and, I thank God, in a very good way, and nearly well. Mrs. Pulteney was so reasonable as to con-

* Now Countess of Bath.

sent

sent to the operation, though she has strong prejudices against it, and scarcely any fears in the natural way: so it must be supposed she suffered a severe struggle during the suspense. In a few days I hope she will enjoy the comfort of knowing that all is safely over.

I sent your message to Lord Lyttelton, who I find thinks the claim a more serious affair than you do. Poor good man, his situation will be a difficult one if the trial goes wrong. What a complication of wickedness is to be disentangled in that wretched family to which his daughter has allied him, before any one end of the thread can be laid hold on, even if any end can be found at all! Happily for him there is a world where the virtues of the good do not suffer from the follies and the vices of the thoughtless and the profligate.

Lady Primrose is just returned from an excursion to Old Windsor, and is looking vastly well, as Miss Cooper told me last night. Mrs. J. Pitt is at Sunning Hill. Of Mrs. Dunbar, and many more of our friends, my expulsion prevents my knowing any thing. Lord and Lady Dartrey set out for Bath on Monday; he has been ill of the jaundice. I have this moment received a Note from Mrs. Montagu, in which she tells me she is very well, and that my quarantine is over.

It is very mortifying to me to be told that you come to England this year, but not before I leave London. However I am glad for the sake of those who will be the better for your coming, but pray tell me in your next, that your being here in the summer will be no impediment to my finding you in Bolton Row if I live till next winter. You may send the muslin by whatever conveyance is most convenient to you, provided it be made up. I wish I could find it less difficult to convey a little parcel to you. I have had a set of Essays, &c. written by my angel friend Miss Talbot, bound for you, which I long to get to Ireland, but believe I must wait till Lady Dartrey goes. Never was there a truer picture of any mind than this little work is of its author: and I have the pleasure of finding it universally read and approved and admired. I was in great pain on hearing Mrs. Handcock had been ill, but I have lately had the comfort of finding, from the intelligence of some Irish gentlemen who have lately seen you, that she is now very well; I beg my best love to her.

I know of nothing very remarkable going on at present, except preparations for a masquerade at the Pantheon. Perhaps you may think it one singular phœnomenon in the present winter, that the macaroni gentlemen wear artificial nosegays. Surely this species of animal is not an English character.

racter. Such a composition of monkey and demon, as at one half of the day appears to be studying all the tricks of the most trifling and contemptible foppery, and in the other is raving and blaspheming at a gaming-table, must be an aggregate of all the follies and all the crimes that a worthless head and a profligate heart can collect from all parts of the globe. Next winter may perhaps furnish a companion to the picture, and exhibit the coterie ladies making riots at the play-houses, armed with oaken clubs, knocking down watchmen, and demolishing lamps,—and fainting away at the sight of a spider, or an earwig.

Adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I am afraid you will think this rainy day disposes me to be censorious. But in rain or sunshine I am ever most affectionately, &c.

LETTER LXVIII.

Clarges Street, *April* 28, 1772.

I KNOW not how to express my gratitude to you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for your kindness

ness in so immediately answering my last Letter, better than by following your example. Before I proceed any further, pray take notice, that I denounce open war against you if you ever repeat the injury of supposing me capable of burning such Letters as your's either before or after I have read them *.

You are very kind in promising to let me know the result of the trial. I will take the liberty you allow me, and say nothing to Lord Lyttelton of your last Letter. I believe his hopes are by no means very strong, at least they were not when I last heard him speak of the affair, so that there is no great cause to apprehend his being quite unprepared for either event, and I think the less he hears while it is in suspense the better. One would wish a friend, if possible, to sleep out all the time between the beginning of such a doubtful affair and its conclusion. In most cases the blow that is felt by a certainty of the worst is a coup de grace compared with the agitations that rack the mind during a state of suspense.—What is the loss of that mere artificial bauble a title, to any natural distress of the heart? I am sure you will be grieved to hear that

* It is much to be regretted that the public does not benefit by them. They were returned to Mrs. Vesey's family long before Mrs. Carter's decease.

poor

poor dear Lady Juliana Penn has lost Mrs. Baker. She had lain-in nearly three weeks without any ill symptoms whatever, but was then seized by a fever, which carried her off in a week. This amiable young woman has left her friends all the consolation that can be derived from a reflection on the consequences of her virtues. During the short time in which she had an opportunity of acting for herself she plainly appeared to be pursuing the same plan of duty and usefulness in society for which the excellent family to which she belongs is so remarkably distinguished. Lady Juliana supports this heavy stroke with all the composure and resignation that can be expected from such principles as her's. I believe you do not know Mr. Baker, a most amiable man, and worthy of such a wife; most sincerely do I grieve for him.

I had consigned the books, before I had received your Letter, to the care of Mrs. Dunbar, who was to have sent them by Mr. Jones, but by some means or other they were forgot; however, you will soon receive them either from herself or Mr. Dunbar. Fye upon Mrs. Handcock for shaking her head as if she did not think I should love the gown much the better for every circumstance about it that discovered your kind attention. All our friends are well, many preparing for the general dispersion. This alloy to the present enjoyment of their society

obliges

obliges me to carry my views forward to our reunion next winter, when I hope you will complete the circle. Adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey; my affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock. Miss Cooper is well, and desires her love; I see her every day; we have just been into the Park, and have had all the benefit of a north-east wind in full force.

LETTER LXIX.

Clarges-Street, *May* 28, 1772.

If I could have gained any intelligence worth sending you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, you should certainly have had it immediately; but as I could not, I was glad of Miss Cooper's indulgence to an aching head, as she was so good as to undertake to tell you that I had nothing to tell you myself. Mrs. Norman perfectly well recollects that Lord Anglesea's daughters lived in Bolton-row, but had not the least remembrance of any such person as you mentioned, or any thing particular even about them. Indeed I had very little expectation from my enquiry,

enquiry, considering the distance of time. In the long space of thirty years the scenes are so often shifted on the theatre of life, that few spectators can retain a tolerably distinct idea of any one. Here and there indeed a busy character may happen to say and do something or other that leaves a lasting impression; but the greater number are mere guards and attendants, pages and waiting gentlewomen, who just come in and walk out, and as soon as they have quitted the stage are thought on no more. To be sure one might have given a plain answer to a plain question without all this parade of imagination, but then, though you would have read it sooner, you would not have liked it half so well.

I am now just arrived to the very dregs of a London winter*; most of my friends gone into the country, and the few that remain, in the hurry of preparing to go, so that I have very little to regret that my own journey is fixt for next Tuesday; indeed it would not have been delayed so long, if I had not waited for my father, who is in town. I know you will charitably bestow a world of compassion on me in this season of general dispersion.

* It should be recollected that this observation was made above thirty years since, when the longest day was deemed the middle of summer, instead of being, as now, the very beginning of it.

Indeed the instant of separation is not pleasant; however, though no one, I believe, more fully enjoys the society of those I love than I do, there is happily in my disposition such a gaiety of hope, that my thoughts, instead of dwelling on the present separation, spring forward and anticipate the pleasure of meeting them again. This expectation prevents all the regrets of absence, gives spirit to every intermediate pursuit, and sets the most indifferent objects in an agreeable light. Amongst the inhabitants of a world like this, destined to various situations and to various duties, those who are the most nearly united by choice and affection must often be distant in place. But the connexion remains with uninterrupted force, and preserves its most valuable advantages, while through the several roads of life each is animated by one common purpose, and follows one common guide, under whose conduct all the travellers will at last be sure to meet in the same common and eternal abode.

I have heard nothing lately of the Valencia cause. I hope your agitations are by this happily over, as the last accounts were rather favorable. I have had the pleasure of hearing, though not from herself, that Mrs. Dunbar was got safely to Dublin, and very well. I beg my most affectionate love to her. Mrs. J. Pitt is at Sunning-hill, and will not, I fear, come to town again before I leave it. Mrs.

Montagu

Montagu went to Tunbridge on Monday, of which I was heartily glad, for the last hurry of a London season was beginning to produce its usual effects on her health; but upon the whole I think she has been better this year than I ever knew her for a whole winter. She wished me very much to accompany her to Tunbridge, but as she was neither ill nor alone, and I could be of no particular use, I resisted the temptation, as it would be inconvenient for me to be longer absent from home. Miss Cooper is well, and desires her love to you. She leaves town on Monday. She has been a most delightfully agreeable neighbour to me, and I have been obliged to her for very many entertaining hours, and the kindest attention during my exile from the rest of my friends. Adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey. I am removing to a greater distance from you, as distance is measured upon the surface of the terraqueous globe, but my thoughts will be equally near and ever affectionately your's. Pray let me have the pleasure of receiving a Letter from you soon after I am got to Deal.

LETTER LXX.

Deal, *June* 12, 1772.

THOUGH I say it who should not say it, I believe, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that there is not a decypherer in the world who could have made out your last Letter except myself, not that I am vain enough to ascribe this special power to the particular sagacity of my head, which would never have got me out of such a scrape. Oh what perplexity and confusion of all the twenty-four letters of the alphabet! if it had not been aided and abetted and comforted by my heart.

I have, according to your direction, writ by this Post to Mrs. Perry, and hope soon to find the good effects of it. You have laid me under a restraint, which I feel the more difficult for the very reason that you assign for it, as its being a mark of your affection is the circumstance that would most naturally tempt me to talk of it; however, I promise to be very prudent, and, like Queen Midas, I will whisper the secret only to the reeds, and I think they can scarcely blab it beyond the county of Kent, where as nobody knows you, nobody knows or

cares how little or how much you love me. I heard from Mrs. Montagu last week; she gives me a very good account of her health. I stayed in town till I left very few to regret behind me: I hope soon to hear that they are breathing the fresh air as well as myself. Of all solitudes London is the most dismal and the least improveable.

I hope Mrs. Dunbar has not forgot to bring you Miss Talbot's Essays, which I designed you should have had long before, if I could have found an opportunity of conveying them. I have not yet been able to fix in any regular course of reading, but hope to get more settled and quiet by next week. My head for the last month or six weeks has been uncommonly easy for such a restless kind of head as mine. It has probably been the better for so dry a spring. Be so good as to give my love to Mrs. Handcock, and let her know I shall be glad of twenty-six yards of the cloth she mentions at 4s. 6d. a yard, and am very much obliged for the trouble she has taken about this foolish commission.

How could you be so inhuman to talk in such a dark and alarming way, as if there was any thing except the common accidents of mortality likely to disappoint my hopes of meeting you in town next winter? You are an absolute savage if you do not write soon, and set my heart at rest from this alarm.

I expect

I expect every minute to be summoned to dinner, and I must not make my father wait.

LETTER LXXI.

Deal, *July* 17, 1772.

It is not a week, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that I have been in possession of your kind present, for which I ought to have thanked you by the first Post, but my head has been in so wretched a state ever since, that writing was extremely painful to me, so I was obliged to confine myself to the gratitude of my heart, which sensibly feels this and every other instance of your kindness. Besides this consideration, which forms its greatest value, the muslin is delightfully pretty, and I have looked at it and admired it several times in every day, and feel more pleasure and vanity in the thoughts of making my appearance in it to-morrow than many a fine lady would feel from a birth-day suit. I am transported with the work-bag. I thank you for comprehending what a delightful prize to an old

maid is a bit of pink ribbon that may be worn with impunity, and malice itself cannot object to this decoration where you have placed it. I had a very polite Note from Mrs. Perry from Dover, in which she mentioned her going to Spa, and offered to execute an commission for me there. Will you be so good when you write to present my compliments and thanks, as it was not in my power; and my civility would cost her much more than it is worth if I sent it after her into Germany.

I had a Letter from Mrs. Montagu last night, in which she makes me happy by an account that Tunbridge has been of all the benefit she could wish to her health. She went to town about a week ago, and is preparing to go into Berkshire.

I hope you enjoyed at Lucan, in health and spirits, those few golden days which gave one more lively ideas of summer than any which have gladdened this climate for many years. They have been succeeded here by the cold and sullenness of November. I found my spirits so irresistibly affected by the change that it was with some difficulty I could prevent feeling quite fretful about it. A very unreasonable and unwarrantable kind of impatience this, to quarrel with the natural influences of those elements to which we belong, and which, with all their inconveniencies, we are generally very unwilling to quit. The mechanical

chanical effect indeed it is not in the power of our utmost endeavours to prevent, but the evil, like all others, is much lessened by submitting quietly to it. Indeed the indulgence of any discontent on this subject would have very little excuse, even if all the hours of health and exhilaration were dedicated to the pursuits of wisdom and virtue; but it is still less justifiable when one considers how great a part of them, when no worse employed, are suffered to evaporate in mere harmless trifling, and the childish pursuits of idle and undetermined vivacity.—I beg your pardon for troubling you with this lesson for myself, but I seldom feel any unreasonable tendency so strongly as when I see it exprest in black and white. The determinations of thought are often so subtile and volatile as to elude the grasp of the mind, unless they are fixed down by some external assistance. And so because I am too idle to undertake this exercise merely for my own private edification, I am mightily apt to instruct myself at the expence of the patience of my friends.

If you ever see Mrs. Dunbar be so good as to assure her of my affectionate love. I have the pleasure of hearing from every body that she looks delightfully and is very well, but not one word have I had from herself. Lady Dartrey I am sorry to say I do not hear so good an account of. Adieu! my dear Mrs. Vesey. My kind love to Mrs. Handcock;

Handcock: if she was so good to be my proxy in the fitting the negligée, it has succeeded à merveille, for it wanted very little alteration indeed. Let me hear from you soon. Heaven bless you.

LETTER LXXII.

Deal, *Aug.* 10, 1772.

It was indeed most kindly attentive of you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to forbear acquainting me with poor dear Mrs. Henry's accident, till you could inform me that the worst of it was over. Even now I cannot help feeling my spirits strongly affected by the remaining sufferings which she herself supports with so much patience and cheerfulness. I am very thankful however, that the most painful and dangerous of them are past, and I hope every day will now diminish them. I beg you will assure her of my kind love and most affectionate good wishes. I know I need not ask you to give me very soon an account how she goes on, as you are sensible of the anxiety

anxiety I must feel for so truly good and valuable a friend. It is no wonder she should support herself in a manner very superior to many of those whom you call my beaux. They *talked* and *reasoned* upon their principles; she *feels* and *acts* upon her's. I rejoice both for Mrs. Henry and for you in the size of your venerable rooms; in such a confinement and in such weather, a free circulation of air is a most essential comfort. It was happy you had a friend to partake your cares in nursing. I hope your health has not suffered by the shock, and the anxiety which you must have felt from this distressful accident.

Mrs. Montagu is going into Oxfordshire to visit Lord and Lady Nuneham. Not long since I heard from poor Lady Juliana Penn; she proposes spending the summer at Stoke. She writes in a style of divine resignation, of which she gives the best proof by mentioning with cheerfulness and gratitude her still remaining comforts and blessings. Pray rejoice the heart of Mrs. Henry by this paragraph.

What is become of Mrs. Dunbar and half the friends I have in the world, I know not; as they do not trouble themselves to give me any intelligence about their situation. I comfort myself in the hope, while I hear nothing to the contrary, that they are well and happy, whether they think of me

or not is of very little consequence in their train de vie, whatever it may be to mine, who, by mixing very little in the bustle of the world, am apt to make a serious point of the concerns of my heart, to which I find much more leisure to attend, than people who are more engaged in an attention to *things*.

A thousand thanks to you for giving me the hopes of seeing you in town this winter, I am delighted at the idea of probably finding you there at my arrival. It is with the utmost difficulty my head has allowed me to proceed thus far, but I was determined not to omit this Post. I quite depend on your giving me very early, and I trust good intelligence of your malade. All happiness attend you, your nursery and friends.

LETTER LXXIII.

Deal, *Oct.* 18, 1772.

On the first sight of your hand, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I had formed an agreeable expectation of finding your Letter dated from some druid's cave, or monument: you will easily guess my disappointment and grief at finding your leaving Ireland delayed by such a reason. I should have been more alarmed, however, about dear Mrs. Handcock's situation, if I had received the account from any one less tenderly interested. But your general sensibility heightened by strong particular affection, has I trust filled you with worse apprehensions than there is any real ground for. It could not I think be expected that with a violent contusion, and probably some strain, she could be much better in eight days. It is very affecting to me to think, how your spirits must have been harassed during this last summer. But such events are a source of true comfort in the reflexion, when they have called out the exertions of such a heart as your's. In every

Letter

Letter I receive from Mrs. Henry, she speaks with the most lively gratitude, and kind affection, of the unwearied attention and goodness which she experienced from you all at Lucan during her melancholy confinement. Indeed it was quite a blessing that her misfortune should have happened in a place where it received every possible alleviation. May Heaven recompence all the melancholy hours which have been so kindly devoted to your suffering friends in Ireland, by many cheerful ones with those who so sincerely and anxiously wish for you in England.

It is well for my vanity that the Duchess of Leinster has no opportunity of comparing me with the flattering picture drawn of me by my kind and partial friends. You once before mentioned a desire of showing her some of my Letters, and I then left you as I do now to follow your own inclination, or rather discretion. If your opinion of the effect they might be likely to produce, was as well grounded, as I am persuded it is sincere, I should be happy in the use which you propose to make of them, but there is something very different in the kind of impression made on the heart of a friend to which they are immediately addressed, and the judgment of an uninterested reader. However

ever at all events, if it will give you pleasure, you have my free consent to do as you like *.

On reading your description of the beautiful situation of your cottage, I could not help fetching a sigh, to think how incapable you then were of enjoying it. But the walks of Paradise would lose their charms if they were haunted by the evils of mortality. But it is well for our present imperfect virtue, that the innumerable circumstances which must concur to make up the sum of a single hour of happiness, are of so precarious a nature as to remind us perpetually of that dependance, which if our enjoyments were more complete we should so soon be in danger of forgetting.

It was not till last night I got your Letter, and I answer it immediately; as I shall be very anxious to know how dear Mrs. Handcock does, I must request you to be equally speedy; my affectionate love and best wishes attend her. Adieu! dear Mrs. Vesey. God bless you, and send you happily among us.

* Mrs. Vesey's opinion upon this subject never varied; and this reply of Mrs. Carter gives a complete and additional sanction to the present publication.

LETTER LXXIV.

Clarges Street, *May* 26, 1773.

YOUR spirit has a most restless life, my dear Mrs. Vesey, if it is fluttering after all your friends who are now dispersing themselves to the four winds of heaven. It had better have sat quiet with me in Clarges Street, where I have been obliged to remain an idle hearer of the bustle of others, as an ill-timed little fever has confined me very much, though not totally, to my pillow. This is the first day I have felt any comfortable symptoms of returning health. My fever, I thank God, is nearly gone, and I shall I hope in a day or two be able to join in the hurry that is necessary to transport one to a distance from the spot, to which all one's trumpery has been fixed for so many months. I hope to set off for Kent next Wednesday, and to be quietly fixed there for the remainder of the year, awake to all the blessings I find in that situation, and sometimes amusing myself with pleasant dreams of next winter. I need not say how principal a figure you will make in the picture: for I am determined to hope without hesitation that you are to be in England, though when I taxed you with

with it, you was so cruel as to say you did not think so yourself.

In however small a degree I may have been instrumental to so happy a change in the friend you mention, I am very thankful for it. But indeed it was the operation of a higher power, whose goodness will never suffer any honest mind to wander in darkness, while it carefully and diligently seeks for light. The probity of her character, a strong sense of religion in general, and a sincere desire of discovering the truth, were such qualifications as naturally lead to conviction, and must always obtain the assistance necessary to produce it.

I hope your tenderness gives you more alarm about dear Mrs. Handcock than is necessary, I wish you could persuade her into more exercise. I am glad Lady Primrose is so well, your visit will do her a world of good. Do not despond, you will beyond doubt, my dear Mrs. Vesey, recover the delightful enthusiasm for rural objects, to which I am persuaded a few dark clouds have given only a temporary interruption. The first bright day will restore verdure to the fields, and harmony to the groves, and I hope to find by your next Letter, (for I fear you will not return to London before I go) that you are enjoying all the beauties of the country with your usual poetical spirit. It

is but seldom perhaps that merely the increase of years deprives us of innocent and reasonable pleasures. They are much oftener lost among the passions and interests and schemes of the world. When the mind has been so happy as to keep tolerably out of the tumult, it will, as long as any of its faculties remain, be awake to every unsophisticated delight. Adieu! my head says I must have done, and however unwillingly I am obliged to obey—God bless you.

LETTER LXXV.

Tunstal, *June* 8, 1773.

SOMETHING whispers me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that you are still in town, and I feel a pleasure in thinking I can once more converse with you in Bolton-row, before that long absence in which my thoughts must travel over such a length of land and sea to find you. There is not indeed any part of the globe, to which they would not follow you, but it is less pleasant to find you in an unknown region, and amidst objects with which I

have no connection, than in that dear green dressing room, where I have passed so many happy hours with you. Amidst all the tender regrets, which I feel from their being so long suspended, I love and cherish the hope which enlivens me by the prospect that they will return again. In the mean time let us accommodate ourselves to the necessary interruptions which the best and most eligible enjoyments of society must often undergo from the condition of an imperfect and varying life; and by endeavouring to improve every opportunity of our several situations, become more endeared to each other, in proportion as we become better, and consequently more secure in the glad expectation that when or wherever we next meet, the meeting must be happy.

I beg my kind love to Mrs. Handcock; I hope she has not suffered by the hurry of her spirits on the suddenness of the scheme for setting out. Both she and you will have forgiven my abrupt manner of going off on Tuesday; as I am sure you will both believe I should have been more civil if I had felt less. I was waked in the night at Dartford by a noble peal of thunder, and wished to know if you and some more of my friends, who love the sublime of the elements, shared it with me. I thought on you all: recommending you and myself to heaven; and then as none of you were visibly present

present to speculate with me on the tempest, quietly returned to sleep in the midst of it.

My love to Miss Cooper, and be so good as to tell her, that if she is in town I believe Mrs. Pennington will call on her on Tuesday morn, about her breakfast hour. If you should not be gone, I am sure she will be delighted to call on you, and her old acquaintance Mrs. Handcock. She begs her compliments to you both. I defer writing to Mrs. Montagu till I get to Deal; but your motions are so uncertain, that I would not omit the first chance of a Letter finding you in town. Be so good as to remember me kindly to Mr. Vesey, thank him for my books, and tell him I shall think of him with more kindness than ever, the sooner he contrives to get back to England. As I have a great partiality for Ireland, I am perfectly well contented it should share you with us, and it is welcome to all the long days of summer: but it should in return allow us some winter evenings.

I hope soon to hear from Miss Cooper, and you will remember your promise of desiring her to acquaint me with your proceedings, do not add to your hurry by writing yourself. I propose being at Deal to-morrow evening. Adieu! my dearest Mrs. Vesey; God conduct you safely to your present destination, and restore you happily to us again.

LETTER LXXVI.

Deal, *July* 16, 1773.

THOUGH I longed impatiently to hear from you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, your silence gave me no suspicions. I am too well convinced of your affection to a friend who so sincerely loves you, not to believe that you would think often and kindly of me, whether you told me so or not. Yet one is always pleased by every confirmation of an interesting truth, even where the conviction is ever so strong, and I heartily thank you for every affectionate expression in your Letter.

By this time I hope you are in health and good spirits, enjoying all the beauties of Lucan, and all the delightful reveries of your own imagination. I lament for you who I hope will so often travel through Wales, that its poetical and romantic grandeur is so tamed and dwindled, that you were obliged to go so far out of your way to find a spot capable of amusing you with the danger of breaking your neck. Probably, however, the inhabitants of a country so altered may feel more obligations to the prosaic taste of the turnpike commissioners than you do. Safety, ease, and convenience are

very agreeable circumstances in a place of abode; though the sublime objects of untamed nature afford so high an entertainment to the imagination of a poetical traveller.

I sent your Letter to Miss Cooper by the very next Post after it arrived. I heartily thank you for giving me leave to read it; when I saw that it was not sealed, I longed for the permission which I found so kindly granted at the end of your Letter to me. Miss Cooper is such a wretch that she has not writ to thank me for the conveyance of what I know would give her so much pleasure. When I heard from her, she was preparing to go to Bromley; but she did not omit mentioning dear Mrs. Handcock's galanterie of the tea cups; my love and thanks to her, but I firmly believe we neither of us needed any such memento of her, but I am sure we shall both find the tea much the better, which is conveyed to us in such a proof of her friendship for us.

Lady Ancram and Mrs. Crofton are at Deal Castle, and I hope are likely to remain there the most part of the summer. They both enquired much after you—The match between Lord Carmarthen, and Lady E. D'arcy seems to be renoué tout de bon. I wish you joy of finding a live genius in the Isle of Anglesea: which I am persuaded

suaded you would think the next good thing, to meeting the ghost of a druid.

You ask me why the "head is always so suspicious of the heart." Indeed, my dear Mrs. Vesey, it would be happy for us if this was always the case, particularly in that instance in which you seem to think it so strange, "the emotions of the most *innocent* affection." It is upon this very account that they require the strictest guard, and the most careful direction. Our wrong dispositions are open enemies, which at the first view declare war against our virtue and our happiness. Our innocent affections are amiable but imprudent friends, which, if they are suffered to take the lead, may carry us through flowery paths into situations of inextricable perplexity and danger; though the most endearing and valuable companions of our way, when they are taught to submit to a proper guidance.

I hope soon to hear from you, and pray tell me when I may again frank my Letters to Mr. Vesey; though if you are wise you will conceal it, for there is no guessing whether I might not have pursued the subject you threw in my way through another sheet, if I had been perfectly sure my dissertation was worth the encrease of postage, which, happily for you, I do not think a very clear point. Heaven bless you.

LETTER LXXVII.

Deal, *Sept.* 2, 1773.

It is impossible for me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to begin my Letter with any other subject than that which I am sure must at present be so near your heart as the loss of our excellent and dear Lord Lyttelton *. To his friends alone this is a melancholy event, to himself I trust it proves most joyful. From a world which so little deserved his virtues he is removed to the applauding society of saints and angels, and to the righteous Judge, who will reward them. Except the testimony of a good conscience, a long series of disappointments in every human pursuit left him a very small portion of happiness below. His great integrity, his amiable simplicity, and the gentle temper of his mind, rendered him unfit for the advancements of life, which in this bad world are procured and supported by arts to which his soul was an utter stranger; and

* Some passages of this and the following Letter were printed in the Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, but they are inserted here in order to preserve the connexion of the Letters, which would have been incomplete without them.

the affections of his heart were disappointed in every scheme of that domestic comfort which he was so peculiarly qualified to impart and to enjoy. He was a noble and edifying example of the power of Christian principles in many instances, and very particularly in that absolute resignation to the divine will, which calmed his mind amidst all the storms which with almost unremitting violence beat upon him. In all the conversations upon his misfortunes to which I have been witness, I do not recollect ever to have heard him utter a single murmur or complaint. It pleased God to try him in the "furnace of affliction," and like gold he came out with the greater purity and the brighter lustre.—The concluding scene of his life was conformable to all the past. The account is very affecting but very delightful. His sun set in calm splendour without a cloud, his mind was supported by Christian faith, and his hopes were full of immortality.—Mr. Pepys was with him at Hagley to the last; and as Mrs. Montagu will have very particular accounts from him, she will probably, when her mind is sufficiently composed, transmit them to you. I had a Letter from her last night: I thank God her health has not suffered from this stroke. She appears as deeply affected by it as one would naturally suppose her to be, and expresses

herself

herself with as much piety as sensibility on her melancholy loss of such a friend.

I hope you have by this time got rid of the consequences of your bathing. Indeed you are most intolerably rash. Do pray give yourself up a little more to the directions of Mrs. Handcock. Her sober good sense will correct your fancies, and her affection is too strong to suffer her to laugh when there is the least reasonable cause of alarm. By guarding against imaginary distempers you are in perpetual real danger from misapplied and improper remedies. Your prescriptions agree better with your friends than with yourself. You have sent Lady Dartrey to me in very comfortable health, which I hope Bristol will confirm against the attacks of winter. Her sweet little boy, though always very healthy, has evidently acquired a greater degree of firmness, and some addition to his fairy size, since he has been here. She goes to Bristol next week, and had set her heart on carrying the child with her, but it is thought to be so much more beneficial for him to continue some time longer here, that with her usual submission to every reasonable opposition she has agreed to leave him behind. There is nothing very surprising in your tendency to love dear Lady Dartrey prodigiously. The more you become acquainted with her, the more irresistible

sistible you will find it. Her understanding is clear, lively, and elegant, her imagination highly poetical, her virtues are fixed on the steadiest principles of religion, and her heart is amiable to a degree which to any one not perfectly acquainted with it can scarcely be described.

As to your question, *Cynosure* * is one of the names of the polar star, which I think will solve your difficulty. It is perhaps too uncommon and scientific a word, and if the thought was good for much, one would wish that Milton had not by this expression obscured it. I hope you have by this time heard from Miss Cooper, and you will have found that she had too good an excuse for not writing sooner; she is, however, I thank God, better now, though not as well as her friends wish her: I had a Letter to-day. I beg to be kindly remembered to Mr. Vesey and Mrs. Handcock. Farewell, my dear Mrs. Vesey. God bless you. May we be the better by reflecting on the friend

* The Cynosure of neighb'ring eyes. L'Allegro.

A striking instance, among many others, of pedantry in our great poet, which Mrs. Carter's correct judgment could not approve. It seems probable that Milton's taste was vitiated by his familiar acquaintance with the Italian Poets. Cynosure, in its proper sense, is not the pilar star, but the constellation of Ursa Minor, of which the polar star is a part.

who

who is removed from us, and thankful for those whom the divine goodness permits us to enjoy.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Deal, *Sept.* 17, 1773.

THOUGH you must have received a Letter from me before your's could arrive here, yet as you wish to hear from me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I cannot forbear writing again, though I have no new information to give you; as when I condoled with you in my last Letter on the loss of our excellent friend, I told you all the particulars I had learnt in regard to this interesting subject. It is a great blessing to us both that our dear Mrs. Montagu's health has not been affected by this trying stroke.

It is very true that the death of a friend is an awakening call to the heart, to which it is our duty and our interest to attend. Such an awful and affecting memento should alarm our carelessness and excite our diligence in every duty that may

contribute

contribute to our reunion with every virtuous partner of our hearts. Such a disposition will sanctify our sorrows, and give an employment to our minds. But do not let us, my dear friend, "sorrow like those without hope;" nor when one blessing is removed, deject our spirits by melancholy apprehensions about the rest. Surely such hopes as become a Christian will find no difficulty in their admission to a heart like your's, if it was fairly allowed to discover their excellency and importance, and was not driven back by the hurry and tumult of the world; that world which never can bestow any real and secure enjoyment unless it is connected with the hope of a better. The dark cloud of death is ever impending over the gayest scenes, and surely it must be worth our utmost thought and attention to seek for some assistance to penetrate the shade, and discover the prospect of immortality and happiness beyond it. Do not turn your thoughts with such despondency from the view of your return to England, where, God be thanked, there are so many friends who love and wish for you. Let us look forward with cheerful expectation to our all meeting again; and if we indulge this hope with that proper sense of dependance on Him who alone has the power of accomplishing it, we shall be just as well (perhaps much better) disposed to submit

to

to a disappointment, as if we tormented ourselves by a perpetual forecast of it; and all our anticipation of uncertain evils is only just so much misery *à pure perte*.

I most heartily thank you for your delightful account of the manner in which Mrs. Dunbar exerts herself to diffuse happiness around her. So much activity of virtue is such a triumph over the strong impediment of an uncommon degree of natural indolence as nothing but those principles by which she is uniformly guided could possibly effect. I am charmed with your picture of the Chapel. I think Mrs. Dunbar has too good a taste ever to restore the gilding, or obliterate the venerable traces of the sombre pencil of time.

Though you could not seduce me out of the plain turn-pike-road, nor convince me that it was worth the hazard of travelling in the dark, merely to take a view of some spruce villa on the banks of the Thames, or a square brick house with broad sash windows, once inhabited by good Queen Anne, I do think my genius for the sublime could not have withstood your invitation to such a scene of wild natural grandeur as you describe, and I am not sure whether I should not even have followed Miss Vesey into so noble a recess of—"The lone majesty of untamed nature."

I re-

I return you Lord Valencia's Letter, which does him great honour; and I hope is a proof that he has profited by the great blessing of being connected with so excellent a friend. My summer friends in this place are taking their flight like the swallows. Lord and Lady Dartrey went last week. Lady Ancram and Mrs. Crofton on Monday: the former is to return in a few days, but Mrs. Crofton takes up her winter abode in town sans retour. I was very unfortunate in not being able to spend the last day with them, as they kindly wished me. But my father was unwell, and I did not care to leave him at dinner; and in the afternoon, when I could have gone, my head sent me at six o'clock to my pillow.

The last time I heard from Miss Cooper she was got better; probably she has told you that the King has given Dr. Beattie a pension of 200*l.* a year: at which I think every friend to genius, dedicated to the service of religion and of virtue, will rejoice. The Dr. and Mrs. Beattie have been at Sandleford, but were preparing to leave it when I heard last from Mrs. Montagu. Mrs. Scott is still with her. My affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock and Mrs. Dunbar. I rejoice to hear she is so near you. Do pray write soon. It cannot, I think, hurt your spirits to converse with a friend in whom you have

so kind a confidence, and of whose sincere affection and most ardent wishes for your happiness you cannot doubt. May God bless and preserve you, and give you every assistance you need!

LETTER LXXIX.

Deal, *Sept.* 25, 1773.

Though I wrote to you not above a week before I received your last kind Letter, yet as you tell me it is a consolation to you to hear from me, I cannot forbear writing so soon again. It grieves me to find your spirits are still so low; but do endeavour to raise them from the melancholy chambers of the grave, to those glad regions of immortality and happiness, where I trust our excellent friend is rejoicing in his escape from the sufferings of probationary life. It would be absolutely selfish to wish him back again into a world where his trials derived their most painful acuteness from the sensibility of his virtue.

How could you think that I could ever give my consent for printing that incorrect and imperfect sketch,

sketch *, which the first effusions of my heart naturally produced, when I was conversing with a common friend so nearly interested in the subject? I join with you in wishing there may be a well writ life of good Lord Lyttelton: but I am very far from being equal to such a task.

Though I agree with you in the great use that may be derived from an account of the life of a character of distinguished excellence, I differ from you with regard to the persons who will receive the benefit from works of this kind. They contribute, as every thing else does, to make the good better, but seldom or never to reform the bad. Those whom you justly characterize by the title of "Unfeeling scoffers," are as impenetrable to example as they are to reason; and though, as you say, they may be silenced, they will not be convinced: for conviction is not an operation of the head, but of the heart. This is the doctrine of inspiration; and common sense and experience bear ample testimony to its truth. You say Lord Lyttelton "became a Christian from philosophical enquiry."—But upon that enquiry he entered with a mind undisturbed by passion and unbiassed by prejudice,

* Of the character of Lord Lyttelton, in the first Letter written after his death.

and

and consequently with a heart full of virtuous dispositions. Had his head been ever so speculative and philosophical, with the pride and malevolence, and dissoluteness of Bolingbroke, or the pert paradoxical vanity of Hume; with all his enquiries he had remained an unbeliever.

I am much obliged to you for mentioning Mrs. Dunbar, for, alas, I never hear any thing from herself: be so good as to mention in your next when they talk of leaving Ireland. Lady Dartrey is gone to Bath instead of Bristol, as his Lordship has been ordered the Bath waters: she continues, I thank God, well. When I last heard from Miss Cooper she was tolerable, and talked of going to Encombe.

God bless you, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, and raise your spirits from their present melancholy views to happier prospects! Pray write soon, for I shall be very anxious till I hear from you.

LETTER LXXX.

Deal, *Dec.* 8, 1773.

YOUR Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, was writ when your mind was sobered and composed by the quiet retirement of Lucan: my answer will find you amidst the hurry and flutter of Dublin, where, too probably, alas, the tumults of the world will not much dispose your mind for fixing on the subjects which engaged it in the vacant hours of calm uninterrupted solitude. Yet I know you will wish to hear from me: and I shall naturally follow the train of thought into which your Letter leads me, whether or not you have forsaken it yourself*.

When I recommended Sherlock's Sermons, I believe I did it with some exception; many, indeed most of them, are very excellent. Most of those in which he defends the general truth of Christianity, and answers the cavils of unbelievers, are writ with a clearness and a spirit which are seldom equalled. But in some others he is obscure and confused, and seems either not to have understood

* Here follows what is printed in page 617 of Mrs. Carter's Memoirs, 4to. edition.

himself,

himself, or not to have wished to be understood by others. Upon some occasions too, he appears to me to have caught the spirit of the society * to which he preached, and to be a great deal too *clever*. Archbishop Secker's Sermons are absolutely free from these objections, and are, I think, upon the whole the most calculated to awaken the conscience and amend the heart, of any that perhaps were ever published.

You have drawn such a fine sombre picture of your situation at Bath, as would have delighted my gothic imagination if I had not deeply felt for the sad effect it had upon your's. There can, I think, be little doubt but that a long attention to the scenes which you describe, immediately succeeded by such a distemper, was the mechanical cause of that dreadful idea which so strongly took possession of you. But give me leave, my dear friend, to observe, that the more painfully you feel the impression of this dreadful delirium, the more you should be excited to counteract it, by applying your thoughts to the only remedy against its terrors. Christianity alone can brighten the dark passage with which your imagination was too long engaged, and open the prospect of life and immortality beyond it.

* He was Master of the Temple.

I am

I am much obliged to you for your anecdote of the young Duke of Leinster, which was extremely affecting, and very much to his honour. You talk of losing the Duchess. Is she to come to England? Our dear Mrs. Montagu has had no return of fever since she came to town, I hope therefore it is entirely gone. I am happy to say she is cautious, and when I last heard from her she had not once been out of an evening. Her spirits do not seem to be good; but perhaps this may be no disadvantage to her health, for which they are generally apt to be too good.

I propose to leave this place the 28th of this month. If you are not so very good as to let me hear from you before I go, I hope you will, however, give me the pleasure of a Letter very soon after I get to town. Consider how much I shall want it to comfort me for your absence, which I shall feel so much more sensibly than I do here, when I am within a few doors of the house where I spent so many happy hours of almost every day with you last winter. Adieu, God bless you, and direct you into the path of true happiness.

LETTER LXXXI.

Clarges Street, *Jan* 25, 1774.

INDEED, my dear friend, I should be inclined to think even the tumult of Dublin a more reasonable amusement than "the silent churchyard," if, like Plato's discontented ghosts*, the mind only hovers over that scene of melancholy and desolation, and does not penetrate into the world of life and activity and social joy, which are lodged beyond it; from whence perhaps the gentle spirit of him whose removal you lament, looks back with kind compassion on the imperfect, interrupted, and insecure enjoyments of the friends whom he has left behind him.

Ma l'huom chino alla terra, al ciel non mira
Sol perche troppo sente, e poco crede.

Faith indeed is the only medicine, that can assuage the pains of *sentiment*: and they whose hearts are apt to feel the most severely, are the most par-

* From this passage of Plato, Milton appears to have borrowed the idea contained in those highly poetical, but ungrammatical, lines in Comus, which begin, "Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp."

ticularly

ticularly concerned to strengthen the one in proportion to the other.

You need not, I hope, be under any particular concern about Mrs. Montagu. I found her, God be thanked, much better than I expected. The fever which had so greatly alarmed me by its long continuance in the summer, is effectually removed; she is not thinner, I believe, than she was last winter, and her looks are not unhealthy. Mrs. Dunbar and Mrs. J. Pitt are very well. Mrs. J. Pitt, whose active spirit of benevolence is always at work for the good of the friendless and distressed, has proposed a scheme for examining into the merit of petitions for charity: to relieve those who are really entitled to it, and, as far as can be lawfully done, punish impostors and cheats. Whether it will succeed or not, I cannot tell: but one feels a satisfaction from even the consultations upon such a subject. Mr. Pitt enters warmly into the project. Several of our friends had a meeting upon it last Sunday evening, and are to meet again for the same purpose the next*. I could not help reflecting with how much more real pleasure this party retired to their pillows after a Sunday evening spent in this manner, than if it had been past amidst the gay tumult of the world.

* This was the origin of the Ladies' Charitable Society.

Miss Cooper is better in health than she was last winter.—Lady Primrose, I think, in appearance much the same. I met your friend the Duchess of Montagu there one evening: and for most part of the time there was no other company, which gave me an opportunity of hearing the Duchess talk more than I ever had done, and consequently enough to convince me of all I have heard you say to her advantage. Indeed the party was so very pleasant, that I was extremely sorry when it came to an end.

It is talking in much too gloomy a style, when you say you "cannot look through the perspective of time to come, upon this earth, with any hope of sunshine." The tender regret which we must feel for the present loss of those who have finished their journey before us, surely ought to be mixed with a high degree of thankfulness for the numbers who are still continued to accompany and enliven our way; and with a cheerful hope that a gracious Providence will ever supply all those supports and comforts which we need to our very latest stage, if we endeavour to entitle ourselves to its assistance and protection. Whenever "it appears to you as if there was no stand necessary for you to keep," consult your reason, consult your Bible, and both will tell you that such an appearance is absolutely false. Without recurring to any effects produced upon the general

general system, every individual in every stage, and under every circumstance of existence, has a a post to maintain, in which it is placed by the sovereign Disposer of the universe: on a diligent attention to the duties arising from that situation, whatever it be, and not from a desertion of it, must all our happiness depend.

It heartily grieves me to find you suffer so much from the want of quiet sleep. I fear this complaint is not likely to get much better while you continue in Dublin. The agitation of spirits, raised by crowded assemblies and heated rooms, is such an enemy to repose, as I fear no medicine can be able to counteract. Indeed it would do you a vast deal more good to try whether some change of air, of hours, and mode of living, might not remedy this evil, than to amuse yourself with speculations on the remote and hidden causes from whence it arises. You bid me tell you what neither I, nor any other mortal can tell. The manner in which soul and body is affected by each other is one of those impenetrable secrets with which, because it is impenetrable, we have no concern. All our business is to improve the moral consequences arising from it, and exalt our ignorance into a virtue. Our being so little able to account for a point so intimately near us, affords a striking lesson of humility, and should check our idle curiosity

sity and extravagant demands in other instances of truth beyond our conprehension.

This Letter was begun some days ago, but the thaw so relaxed me, and made such a poor animal of me, that I was unable to finish it. I will not attempt to tell you how sincerely I regret sending you a Letter, instead of the delighful intercourse of cards and twisted notes. But I relieve this painful feeling by looking forward to the hopes of next winter. I was last night at Mrs. Ord's, with Mrs. Montagu, and she was very well and in very good spirits. We called first on dear Lady Dartrey, who is looking better than I ever saw her, and is literally grown fat: Miss Cooper was there, and they all desire their love to you, and regret almost as much, (and I believe I might say quite), as I do, the not seeing you amongst us; but we talked with pleasure and delight of our expectations for next winter. Let me hear from you soon. God bless you, my dear friend. Adieu.

LETTER LXXXII.

Clarges Street, *April* 25, 1774.

By this time I hope, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that indisposition which gave so melancholy a tincture to your ideas is perfectly removed, and that you think of your friends as engaged in their several pursuits and walking up and down the surface of the earth, and not slumbering in a churchyard. It is, perhaps, one of the hardest tasks in the conduct of the mind, to prevent its being influenced by the phantoms of disordered health; and people of weak nerves should be early taught to guard against the misrepresentations of distemper. This caution is much more in our power, I am convinced, than is usually supposed: and yet I do not recollect to have ever seen it taught or recommended in any treatise of education that has ever fallen in my way.

For fear you should still retain any painful apprehensions about your friends, I am so happy as to be able to acquaint you that they are all as well as usual. Mrs. Montagu is I hope upon the whole better than usual. She has frequent little attacks, which must be expected from great exertions operating

ting on very delicate health, but they soon pass off, and there is no teaching her moderation in her amusements and societies. She talks of going to Tunbridge before she sets out for Northumberland: and I hope she will visit it too after her return, for the waters always do her more good than any medicine, because they seem to strengthen and brace her nerves.—As to myself I go on much as usual, sometimes better, sometimes worse; and never bad enough to give you any reasonable alarm about me. Miss Cooper seems to have quite recovered what she suffered from too great fatigue while she engaged in a particular department of our society *. Boerhaave's fever powder and resigning her post have restored her health. She is going to Bristol this summer to meet some friends from Ireland. The general dispersion will now soon begin, which is always an unpleasant circumstance, but you cannot imagine with how different feeling I take leave of a winter which ends in your departure from England, from that which encourages me to look forward to your return, at the next reunion of our friends.

* The Ladies' Charitable Society mentioned before, in which the Ladies took unwearied pains in examining the merits and necessities of the petitioners, and giving relief accordingly.

And yet the fairest expectations of meeting those we love must be liable to perpetual clouds, unless the mind is habituated to extend the prospect beyond a world which must ever be liable to disappointment. Indeed I grieve for what you call your melancholy fancies: but, my dear friend, why will you suffer your imagination to fix itself on the dismal sound of the passing bell, and the dark chambers of the grave, instead of teaching it to wander through the regions of light and immortality, amidst the great community of happy spirits? You love society: take a view of that brilliant assembly described by an author (Heb. xii. 22, &c.) who gives such excellent rules for securing an admission to it: and when any painful ideas of separation deject you, let it comfort your heart.

The Charitable Society is soon to break up for the summer months, but it is to begin again in November. In the mean time some care will be taken of such objects as by age and sickness are disabled from working. Our new subscription is to begin in January. I should think there could be no objection to your becoming a member of the society when you are in England, from any patriotic principles, as so very considerable a part of the objects relieved by it are Irish. I wish you well

well through your mythological quartos *. I have nearly got to the end with the same opinion I began.

Lady Arabella Denny has been some weeks in town, but we must soon resign her to you again; and indeed it would be monstrous to wish to detain such a treasure from a country which, to our shame be it spoken, is indulged with so few advantages. She has kindly allowed me to see her pretty often. I highly reverence her character, and think her manners remarkably pleasing.

I beg to be kindly remembered to Mr. Vesey, and Mrs. Handcock; do pray write soon, and tell me if you have got rid of your cold and your gloomy ideas. Be so good as to let Mrs. Henry have the enclosed. It is but two or three days since I received your Letter. God bless you, farewell.

* Bryant's Mythology, of which Mrs. Carter gives a general opinion in the next Letter with her usual good sense.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Clarges-Street, *May* 4, 1774.

THOUGH by the rules of ordinary calculation I believe it is not very long since I received your Letter, yet I am so accustomed to write to you immediately, that it seems to me quite an age that I have deferred it. I cannot allege the putting myself to school as the reason of my silence as you do, which I beg for the future you will reserve for such of your Correspondents who cannot read your hand, and not for me who can, and who persevere in pronouncing it to be one of the most legible of all possible hands. Whether I might find it to be such if it belonged to any other writer, is a mere point of speculation, and I take things just as they are; and as I always do find out your meaning, what does it signify whether it be by my eyes or my heart?

The business of our Society, which has lately been more than usual, mixed up with a feverish cold, has prevented my writing to you sooner, as I have every day wished to do. I hope I am growing better, but I still feel very confused and stupified and uncomfortable: though I keep up and down

down the world and am just going to dine with Mrs. Montagu. I hope you will be one of our society next winter. It would do your heart good to see two people who have just interrupted me by returning their thanks for the relief which they have obtained, and which has enabled them to return to their work, which had been interrupted by sickness, which obliged them to part with every thing necessary for carrying on their business.

Mrs. A. Pitt has been abroad ever since I have been in town—I feel pretty much inclined to that kind of constancy which you describe: and I think upon the whole we may be both contented to preserve it. It should only render us as cautious as possible in what manner we bestow our affection, and all will be well. People however must have learnt from long experience, that agrèmens do not always imply moral qualities. Whenever we grow wise enough to chuse our friends only among the friends of virtue and of God, we shall never find constancy to be a painful feeling.

I have not seen Voltaire's verses, nor ever wish to see any thing which attempts to destroy the only hope which as you say "makes this life supportable." No pleasure can be capable of giving any real delight to the human mind unless it is connected with immortal ideas! I feel this so strongly that I can scarcely enjoy a rose or a sprig

of

of myrtle, till my imagination transplants it to the walks of Paradise, where it will be secure from fading.

I meet Lady Bingham sometimes. But have heard nothing that gave intimation of another *scrape*. She mentioned indeed having named *a house* to you, which by her description, one would think is the very house that Mr. Vesey and you might have set down and wished for: and all your friends are grievously disappointed to find you have rejected it. However, provided you will admit us to the dear house in Bolton-row, I am the less solicitous about your refusal of one that will contain all friends.

I do not recollect any late productions in the literary way, except a little volume of very pretty Essays by Miss Aikin, and Mr. Bryant's Analysis of ancient Mythology, of which I have read one volume in quarto. It is a work of immense learning and very great ingenuity, but has to me the fault of almost all the mythological systems I ever read, the want of sufficient proof. When one is professedly invited into the regions of fiction, the further one travels the better. Imagination has a natural right to take the lead, and reason very quietly falls asleep and never interferes in the progress. But whenever an address is made to the understanding,

and

and fancies and conjectures take the place of proofs, I know few kinds of reading so unprofitable and teizing, however ingenious the writer may be. Mr. Bryant is a man of excellent character, and acknowledged abilities, and the tendency of his studies to the highest degree respectable: all this I have a pleasure in mentioning, and perhaps the fault is in myself that I do not feel more convinced of the truth of his system. I am told the second volume is much more satisfactory than the first. I find it is a fashionable book, from which one would infer that this is an age of most profound literature, and from the very nature of his subject it is scarcely possible to discover what he means but by the assistance of Greek and Hebrew.

So your wild genius poor Dr. Goldsmith is dead, he was just going to publish a book called Animated Nature *. I believe a compilation of natural history. I am sincerely glad to hear he has no family, so his loss will not be felt in domestic life; he died of a fever, poor man. I should be happy if I could give you any satisfactory account of dear excellent Lady Frances Coningesby. But alas her

* This is the work of which Dr. Johnson foretold with equal truth and felicity of expression, that Goldsmith was going to write a natural history, and would make it as entertaining as an eastern tale.

health

health will not yet admit of her restoration to the circle of her friends. The subject goes to my heart.

All your friends here are well. I saw Mrs. Dunbar last night, and Miss Cooper this morning. Lady Primrose is gone into the country. Good night. God bless you, I hope you will have pleasant dreams.

LETTER LXXXIV.

Clarges Street, *May* 30, 1774.

Mrs. Montagu is going to Tunbridge, and though I think she needs it less this year than any she has lately passed, yet upon the whole I think she is quite right to go; she would fain have tempted me to go with her, but I am wanted at home, and my day for travelling into Kent is fixed for next Thursday, and I hope very soon after my arrival to be favoured with a kind proof of your remembrance. Lady Ancram * and Mrs. Crofton

* Lord Ancram, now Marquis of Lothian, for several summers inhabited a house in the village of Walmer, near Deal, which had belonged to the Princess Amelia.

have

have been gone some time; they are not much more than a mile distance from Deal. This is very well, but it was better last year when they were much closer. I imagine you will soon have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Dunbar: but the weather for the present retards their journey.

I am just going to wander amongst the tombs in Westminster Abbey, and expect to be summoned every moment. I heartily wish you was to be of the party, which I think you would enjoy. Have you read in the papers an account of the discovery of the body of Edward the First in all his regal attire? It is very true, and all the robe, crown, &c. as fresh and bright as when they were deposited. A very few spectators were admitted to this view of royal mortality. The tomb is again closed; and in spite of all my curiosity I cannot help thinking it extremely right, that the ashes should remain undisturbed: though to be sure no human creature has less title to repose after death than he has, as a conqueror who never let the harassed world remain in quiet while he was alive.

I cannot tell whether there is any good translation of Plutarch's Lives, I think I have heard there is a tolerable one in French, but never saw it. I am not surprized at any blunder in Voltaire's arguments. Wit is a squint of the understanding, which is mighty apt to set things in a wrong place.

I have

I have not seen any of his late writings, nor from the character of them, do I ever design it. I should as soon think of playing with a toad or a viper, as of reading such blasphemy and impiety as I am told are contained in some of his works *.

I heartily thank you for rejoicing me by the intelligence, that the house in Bolton Row is repairing; I comfort myself for the disappointment of the cathedral window, by the reflexion of the impossibility of uniting gothic ideas with a London life. I am extremely sorry that you are prevented from persevering in a remedy from which you found so much benefit. I hope however it will at least serve as a proof, that the disorder which so much alarms you, is not the incurable evil you seemed to apprehend.

It would be with a very ill grace if I found fault with your writing, unless I was to mend my own.

* Though Mrs. Carter would not probably have been in much danger herself from the perusal of irreligious books, yet the principle is a good one. Few persons are capable of detecting fallacies in abstruse and difficult subjects. With half the world bold assertions pass for truth; and wit and sarcasm for unanswerable arguments. Strip Voltaire of these, and of his unfair manner of translating the Bible into modern French, without any reference to the idiom of the original language, or any allowance for oriental manners, habits, and imagery, and nothing will remain which can injure the weakest faith.

However to say truth, I see no reason to wish you would take the trouble of altering it, for I find no difficulty whatever in reading your hand, so I beg you will not change it, unless when you happen to have any scruples about making Mr. Vesey pay for twelve dozen of rat traps. I beg my affectionate remembrance to him and Mrs. Handcock.

LETTER LXXXV.

Deal, *July* 29, 1774.

No to be sure, my dear Mrs. Vesey, you do not deserve that I should write to you for these three months: but as I should find it very difficult to resist the silly inclination which I cannot help feeling to comply with any thing which you think proper to ask, I shall thank you for your Letter just as soon, as if you had answered mine in the most regular way. I know enough both of the tooth-ache and its remedy not to agree with you, in giving it a place amongst the evils of life. Though you are not so explicit as I could have wished, I am willing to infer from what you say, that

that you have got rid both of your pain and of your tooth.

Though our summer has not been favourable, yet by your description it has not been quite so unsummer-like as your's. My roses, and geraniums, and myrtles, are in high bloom and verdure, and I enjoy them as well as I can; but it is in a happier climate that roses grow without a thorn. My spirits are often low from seeing my father almost constantly in pain. Yet I am thankful that it is not violent, and that there is no appearance of any symptoms of danger. But his health is uncomfortable, and it is impossible for me to help feeling it.

I know not what particular circumstances might attend the death of Lord H———, but the miserable situation of himself and family during his life afforded a most awful and important lesson to mankind. All the misfortunes he suffered from the profligate behaviour of his children, were the natural and immediate consequences of those execrable principles which he had himself inculcated upon their minds. Wherever the doctrine, that inclination is to be the only guide of life, is reduced to practice, the wildest monster that roams the desart is less mischievous than a human creature, who is furnished with so many implements and oppor-

tunities of spreading ruin and desolation wherever its activity extends.

Lord Chesterfield's Letters are, I think, the most complete system of French morality that ever disgraced the English language. A system founded neither on principles of virtue, nor sentiments of heart, but upon those selfish motives, which aim at nothing higher than mere bienséance, and which never yet, through the general course of life, procured to any character, confidence, or esteem, or love. It is in vain that Lord Chesterfield would disguise the intrinsic imperfections and deformities of the composition which his instructions would produce, by so strongly recommending the graces. The world is always quick-sighted enough to distinguish between the mere rouge and enamel of artificial good breeding, and those genuine graces which naturally spring from principles, and dispositions, of which unhappily his lordship seems to have been totally ignorant.—All this may I think be fairly said on many of the most specious and plausible parts of the collection; others are more openly detestable. That a father should seriously and earnestly counsel a son to endeavour to make his fortune, by betraying the families into which he is admitted, destroying domestic connexions, and violating the most sacred rights of society, is a degree of profligacy

ligacy which it is to be hoped, even in this bad world, is not often to be found.

I had a Letter from Mrs. Montagu last Post, in which she gives a very good account of herself. I am obliged to you for mentioning Mrs. Dunbar, it is the first news I have heard of her ever since I left London. I lately heard from Miss Cooper, she has been in town for some weeks, but is now returned to Bristol with her kindred. Many thanks to you for your kind confirmation of my hopes of seeing you next winter. Heaven grant us a comfortable revoir of all our society of friends.

I hope Miss Vesey succeeded in her pursuits of the ghost. I do not wonder that Mrs. Handcock should content herself with the screaming of her own peacocks: but that you should sit quiet, when there was the screaming of a ghost to be heard, is very surprizing. Pray was not you enchanted when you were walking with me this morning, as in the midst of my walk I sat under a tree, and saw the gradual illumination of the sun rising through a grove? There is no end to my scribble. My answer to your Letter is sufficiently expeditious, but would have been still more so, if I had not been interrupted by the head-ache and many other unpleasant avocations. Farewell, my dear, heaven guard and keep you.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Deal, *Sept.* 20, 1774.

YOUR Letter found me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, in the melancholy attendance of a sick room, to which my father is at present confined. He is, I thank God, better than he has been, and there is no prospect of any immediate danger; but I dare not indulge the hope that at his age any complete recovery will restore him to comfortable health. I keep up my spirits as well as I can, and I live on from day to day, with as little further view as possible.

Many thanks to you for the marvellous history of the late transaction at ———. However well-grounded the suspicions of that fanfaron knight-errant might be, his behaviour, with regard to the Duchess and her family, was so insufferably insolent and impertinent, that one could not read the account without a high degree of indignation. The reply of the brother was I think spirited and proper. He and the rest of the family are much to be pitied, that by an amiable, though a mistaken, tenderness for the lady, they were prevented from carrying the same spirit throughout, and from withdrawing

drawing their consent from such a connexion. Besides it would have heightened the romance for the lover to have carried off the Lady en croupe to his own castle.

But what answer shall I make to that passage of your Letter, my dear friend, in which you wish to engage my partiality for your amiable friend! What can be said on such a subject but this: let not those who are blest with sober and moderate passions, or are so happy as not to meet with opportunities of indulging them if they are otherwise, let not such too severely censure those who are hurried into extravagant improprieties of conduct, by impulses of which a calm temper of mind can form but an imperfect idea. It appears too evidently by your Letter that you apprehend the report not to be without foundation. There certainly can be no other proof to the world of its falshood, than her dismissing this "Abelard," who is thought so dangerous, however inconvenient it may be to part with him. Her own honour and dignity of character are points of much more importance to her children than any advantage they could gain by the most able tutor *. One would think I was writing

* A subsequent Letter explains this passage, and proves that it relates to the marriage of the Duchess Dowager of Leinster.

her

her a Letter of good advice: but as you entrusted me with this extraordinary story, I naturally mention every thing that arises in my mind upon it.

I should have condoled with you on the frustration of your fête champêtre, but that such a series of strange adventures, I think, must have too much engaged your thoughts to allow you to reflect on the disappointment of your own inventions. I thought your ballad had been composed by Sir Walter Raleigh, though I believe quoted by Shakespeare *. Whoever was the author, probably he could never have dreamed that his soft Arcadian sing-song would ever have been applied to such a doughty blustering Orlando. If you have any continuation of this eventful history, I hope you will communicate it to my curiosity. I shall really be very glad if you can inform me that your friend has confuted the report, for as your friend, I cannot help feeling interested in this point. And indeed the general principles of humanity must make one wish, that a character, whose influence must be of

* In the *Merry Wives of Windsor*,—"Come live with me and be my love." But Dr. Percy, in his *Ancient Ballads*, and after him Dr. Johnson, in his Shakespeare, attributes this beautiful song to Marlow, and the answer to it, "the Nymph's Reply," to Sir W. Raleigh.

very

very wide extent, should not invalidate the force of every right example, by any one instance of extravagant conduct.

This Letter has been begun these ten days, but my spirits are sunk, my father continues to suffer very much, and the greatest part of every day I spend in his room. The longest times of quitting him, are at breakfast and at tea in the afternoon, when I find great relief and comfort from a kind friend, who constantly visits me at those hours. She has an excellent understanding highly improved, a fine imagination, and the rightest principles. She sometimes is so good as to read to me, and her judgement is so exact, and her taste so elegant, that her observations are quite delightful. She is not two and twenty, but a long series of ill health has sobered her mind from all the flutter and dissipation of youth, and left her only its agrémens. I hope she is at present in a way of recovery, and all her former sufferings will be well repaid, by the improvement she has been so happy as to derive from them. I beg to be most kindly remembered to Mr. Vesey and Mrs. Handcock.—Adieu, my dear friend,—God bless you.

LETTER LXXXVII.

Deal, *Nov.* 5, 1774.

YOUR Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, found me in a situation very little capable of thanking you for it, so soon as I could have wished. You have probably by this time heard of the melancholy conclusion of the anxieties I had endured for so many weeks. I am very sensible how infinitely thankful I ought to be to the divine goodness which extended the life of such a parent so much beyond the usual date, and I submit with entire resignation to the stroke which has mercifully been so long delayed. But my heart most painfully feels that dismal vacancy, that forlorn solitude, which succeeds the removal of the chief and constant object of attention. To this I shall in time become accustomed, and I trust recover that cheerfulness of spirits which ought to result from those principles by which it is my earnest desire both to form my conduct, and to regulate the internal state of my mind. I will not allow myself to enlarge upon the subject to which my thoughts and my feelings most naturally incline, as I am too weak at present

to

to indulge them without too exquisite a sense of pain.

I hope you have received less alarming accounts of Lady Primrose, and that you will meet with no uncomfortable circumstance to check the pleasure either of yourself or of your friends, at your meeting in England. I hope to be in town very soon after Christmas, and to find you there. Change of air, instead of hurting Mrs. Handcock, will I trust do her good. London, I believe, is less damp than Dublin, and consequently much less pernicious in rheumatisms and cramps.

I am glad to find your friend the Duchess of Leinster's family have taken so prudent and good natured a resolution. As Mr. O——— is said to be a gentleman, and a man of character, there can be no impropriety or derogation in receiving him, however it might be reasonably wished that neither he nor any other person might have been placed in that situation.

Adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey, writing is a very unpleasant task to me at present, and I have much to do. May the most favourable gales bring you all safely over. You have many friends most impatiently wishing for your arrival, but none more sincerely and affectionately than I do. The very thoughts of finding you well, and in Bolton Row, is a cordial to my exhausted spirits.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Deal, *June* 10, 1775.

THOUGH my head-aches so I can scarcely hold a pen, I cannot forbear attempting to thank you, my dear friend, for the extreme pleasure which I received from your intelligence last night. I can now think of your going to Ireland with great tranquillity of spirit; as the securing the house gives me so good an earnest of your return. I cannot help rejoicing too that it is the very same house which is associated in my mind with so many agreeable ideas.

The fresh air and cool shades of Gatton have, I hope, repaired your spirits, after the heats of London. Here it has been only agreeably and moderately warm. Be so good as to make my compliments and best wishes to Mr. Vesey, and tell him that I now consider him as engaged by all the laws of chivalry and gallantry to fulfil his promise of returning, not to you, but to me, next winter. I do not insist, in these degenerate days, that he should set a swimming across St. George's Channel for my honour: if he will but hold himself

in

in readiness to depart the first hour the Irish Parliament rises, I will be contented to receive him even by the vulgar conveyance of a good tight vessel.

I have had one Letter from Mrs. Montagu, in which I thank God she gives a good account of her health, but complains of the want of spirits, which is not at all strange after they had been so harassed and exhausted. I hope the air and quiet of Sandleford will soon restore them to the cheerfulness which is so natural to them. I am very uneasy about Miss Cooper. Such anxious expectation at such a distance is a dreadful trial of health and spirits. You did not name the subject of her distress, so that unless she had named it herself, I should not have known where to fix it. When you next write tell me some particulars, for she says very little and does not tell me which brother it is; this Post has brought me no worse news, which seems to give better hopes.

I am happy that you think Mrs. Handcock is recovering very fast, as I am sure she must be in a very comfortable way to quiet your apprehensions; my affectionate love to her, pray. I hope you will be wafted over by prosperous breezes, and find Lucan all fragrance and music; and that by the time you arrive there, you will have acquired health sufficient to enjoy it. I grieve to find your

medicines have not had the desired effect, nor given you the relief you expected; more temperate weather perhaps may prove a more efficacious remedy. Let me hear from you before you set out, if it be only a line, that my thoughts may know where to follow you. Good night. God bless you.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Deal, *July* 13, 1775.

And pray, my dear Mrs. Vesey, am not I just as mortal as you? And how could you tell but *I* might be dead! If this was a point worth enquiring into, you might easily have satisfied yourself, as I am fixed to a spot. But where was I to gain any intelligence of you, and to what region of earth, air, or water could I guess where to direct a Letter? In your last you was on the road to Lucan. Since then I heard indeed that you had taken a house at Tunbridge, (but not from you), but how many excursions you were to make before you got thither, and at what time you pro-

posed to arrive, I was totally in the dark; and if I had not been more uneasy about you than your silence deserved, I should have felt quite angry at your letting me remain so long without any account of you, or your change of plan.

You talk as if you wished me at Tunbridge. If you do, come and fetch me. Travelling is good for Mrs. Handcock, and a suspence of drinking the waters will be good for you, and your both making me a visit will be good for me. Your abode here will not at all interfere with your Carthusian scheme, so far as respects a very exact temperance in diet, but that too will be very wholesome for you both. I think you will be pleased with this country, which is very beautiful; and we will go to Dover, and to St. Margaret's, and there you will have the sublime: and we will enjoy the gothic greatness of Canterbury cathedral together at your return. If you approve my proposal, I will go to Tunbridge with you, (I do not mean in your carriage, for I suppose you have only a post-chaise at Tunbridge), and if you have not room for me in your lodgings, I will get one as near you as possible, till Mrs. Montagu arrives, as my engagement is to her, if she chuses to be troubled with me. Do let me hear from you by the return of Post, and let me know if you approve this proposal, which is as pretty a proposal as you shall

meet

meet with in a summer's day; and if you do, when I may expect you, that I may get myself in readiness to attend you. My head has been so bad for the last two days, that I should have deferred writing, if I had not been unwilling to lose a Post. My love to Mrs. Handcock, I hope she will quite approve my scheme.

LETTER XC.

Deal, *July* 21, 1775.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for the trouble you have taken in so kindly searching out a lodging for me, which I cannot bear to think should be à pure perte, and therefore I propose to set out next week, either Wednesday or Thursday, as you say I may come without any warning, and I will not exactly name the day, for fear any thing should happen to prevent me, and so make you uneasy. I can by no means think of depriving you and Mrs. Handcock of your airing, by having your post-chaise to meet me on any part of the road, nor shall I want it to convey me to you, unless you have chosen a lodging

ing for me beyond the compass of a walk, which I flatter myself is by no means the case. I never want any servant when I am out, consequently shall not encumber myself with a maid, for whom I should have no earthly employ but to stand and make curtsies to me. However, I shall like to have a parlour, as perhaps you and Mrs. Handcock would sometimes drink your tea with me by way of variety. I suppose the people of the house would boil my tea-kettle for that and for breakfast, and whenever I have not the pleasure of dining with you I shall not give them much trouble.

I hope we shall soon have the joyful addition of Mrs. Montagu to our party. I imagine her stay will not be long if she goes abroad; and this, with the temptation of coming to Tunbridge before you leave it, makes me set out the sooner, as I would willingly stay a proper time for drinking the waters. It is mortifying to me that you cannot give me the pleasure of seeing you here, and still much the more so from the reason you give for my disappointment. I shall be happy if I find the second trial of the waters more successful to you than the first.

I scarcely know what I write, for my head has been in a wretched state almost ever since I wrote last. I do not flatter myself the waters will do that any good; but I hope they may be of use to

me for the rheumatism. If you receive this Letter on Sunday, and can write that day, I shall be obliged to you for a single line of directions to my lodgings, that I may know where to deposit my trunk, which will indeed be a very light one, as I find you and Mrs. Handcock live too much in a state of nature to make it necessary to me to bring any superfluous attire.

I heartily wish poor Mr. Walker's health may benefit by your humane attentions, he is indeed a really valuable character. You will be glad to hear that Lady Lothian is safely confined to her chamber by the birth of a son. Adieu, my dear kind friend, love to Mrs. Handcock, I rejoice I shall so soon have the happiness of seeing and conversing with you.

LETTER XCI.

Deal, *Sept.* 27, 1775.

It is scarcely worth while, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to dispatch a Letter across the country to answer your question how I do, unless I could give you a more satisfactory answer than that I have just the

the same wretched aching head, of which you must have been so often tired at Tunbridge. But you desire me to write, and in whatever state my head may be, my heart is always ready to obey your commands. Your not setting out till Tuesday is an argument, I hope, of some degree of reluctance at leaving sweet Tunbridge. I shall always recollect with pleasure and gratitude, the hours which you and Mrs. Handcock were so good as to let me pass with you at the dear farm-house. I do not believe that the finest Grecian palace could ever have left a picture in my memory painted in such strong and lasting colours. You cannot think how often I please myself with looking at it.

It rejoices me that the weather is so much improved, and so favourable for your expedition. I think I have a natural right, as I first mentioned Arundel Castle to you, to expect you will give me a full description of it. An account of your other spectacles I am contented to owe to your generosity. Pray do think how much good you will do me, if in an evening, when you are retired to your inn, you will sit down while every object is fresh in your mind, and write me a history of the events of the day. You will not however, I am persuaded, think of quitting the open air, whatever Mrs. Handcock may remonstrate against the dew, as long as you can see the declining moon shed its last

faint gleam on the venerable old structures which you propose to visit. How happy should I be to share your poetical and sentimental contemplations. You do not tell me whether Mrs. Boone was to be of your party, I wish she may, for I believe her taste to be worthy of such an entertainment.

I had a Letter a few days ago from Mrs. Montagu, who seemed to be in very good spirits and very busy. I was obliged to you for the conveyance of Lady Dartrey's Letter, she is at present in Stanhope Street, but is to go next week with Lady Charlotte Finch and all her family to Lord Winchelsea's at Burley. Little Miss Fielding left Deal this morning to be of the party. Her health is much mended since she came here. I received your Letter but last night, so I have been as expeditious as possible. My affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock; if Mrs. Boone is still with you, pray my kind remembrance. My kindest wishes of health and good spirits, and all possible amusement in your journey, you may be sure of. God bless you. Take care of yourself, that we may have a most comfortable meeting next winter.

LETTER XCII.

Deal, *Oct.* 25, 1775.

You would sooner have received my thanks for your kind Letters, my dear Mrs. Vesey, and the account which you desired of the travellers, if I had not waited till I could give you some information, which probably you may have already received from Mrs. Montagu herself. But you will wish to hear the detail. After long expectation and much regret at the loss of every fine sailing day and fair wind, I received a summons from our friend, to meet her with Dr. Douglas and Montagu * at Dover on Thursday last. When we arrived there, I found her servant and a Note, to inform me that she was taken ill at Canterbury, and not able to proceed, for the present at least, on her journey, and exprest a wish of consulting Dr. Douglas. On this we held a council: in which it was determined that he and my nephew should go to Canterbury that night, and I return to Deal, and be determined in my future motions by the account I should hear the next day. Never did three

* The Editor.

poor

poor wayfaring wretches set out with more unfavourable circumstances, in the midst of that storm which I should have been better qualified to enjoy in the old castle which you describe, than when I was exposed to it in the open road. In going up Dover-hill, there is no describing to you the effect of the wind howling amongst the clifts, the roaring and agitation of the tempestuous sea, the dashing of the rain, and the deepening gloom of approaching night. I believe I should have felt more terrors about myself, if I had not been so solicitous about Dr. Douglas and Montagu, who had a much longer time to conflict with the storm. However, I thank God, we all arrived very safe at our different destinations. It was dark by the time I got half way home, and I was quite alone. My driver was sober and careful, but within a mile of my own house the wind and the rain so confounded him, that he twice got out of the road towards a high bank. When I arrived at Deal I twice attempted to walk to Mrs. Douglas to give her an account of her husband, but I found it impossible to stand the tempest. From the account I received of our friend the next day, I went to Canterbury on Saturday, and found her very languid by a low fever, and agitated about the prosecution of her scheme. She grew better before I left her, and I made her promise me that she would not harass her spirits by balancing

balancing about it, but determine not to form any resolution till Monday, when I was to see her again. On Monday I found her, thank God, much mended, but not in a situation, with any degree of prudence, to undertake a voyage by sea, and a journey of a thousand miles by land so late in the year. At length, by the advice of her doctor, and the persuasion of her friends, she was prevailed on to give up the scheme till next summer; and I hope now her resolution is taken, it will very much help to facilitate her recovery, if she keeps to her promise of living very quietly the whole winter. Her illness, I am persuaded, was occasioned by the excessive fatigue of business and company, in wich she has been engaged ever since she left Tunbridge. It is a great relief to my mind that she is determined not to go; for indeed there would have been too much reason to apprehend her being sick amongst strangers in some detestable dirty inn. Dr. Douglas thought she might safely venture to go back to London to-day. She was to reach Rochester to-night. I brought Montagu back with me to Deal on Monday. He bore his disappointment with great good-humour, and so did little Matthew*; I believe poor Miss Gre-

* Matthew Montagu, Esq. of Portman-square, Mrs. Montagu's nephew and heir.

gory * will feel it much the most severely, yet her good sense, I am persuaded, will convince her how infinitely worse her situation would have been if Mrs. Montagu had been taken ill on the road to Nice.

I am extremely obliged to you for your charming description of Sherbourn Castle. Your travels through Sussex I have not seen, nor could I much expect it. I beg my most affectionate compliments to Mrs. Handcock and our excellent friends at Encombe. I directed a Letter to you from Miss Cooper to Bolton-row. I have not room to say much about myself, and it is no great matter, unless my account could be more amusing. Adieu, my dear friend.

* Now Mrs. Alison; daughter to the late, and sister of the present Dr. Gregory of Edinborough; sister also of the Editor's dear and much respected friend, the late Rev. Wm. Gregory, of Canterbury.

LETTER XCIII.

Deal, *Dec.* 11, 1775.

THOUGH, considering your long silence, my conscience might be perfectly at rest if I did not write to you this fortnight, yet you would certainly have heard from me sooner if the almost constant pain of my head did not render writing generally a difficult, and sometimes an impracticable task. For one complaint or other I have been swallowing medicines ever since I saw you, but with so little success, that after having taken all I have left, from a principle of good housewifery, that they may not be wasted, I think, without some very absolute necessity, I will take no more.

And so Mrs. Handcock has no taste for your new invention of a coffee-pot. But she is an intolerable common sense woman. As to her strange objections that the pot has neither spout nor handle, and that the lid will not open, they are certainly quite nugatory; for as it is of a beautiful Etruscan form, it answers every essential purpose of a good coffee-pot—except the possibility of making coffee in it, which is only a mere circumstance, which any one of true genius would easily overlook.

Indeed

Indeed I was downright angry, and am scarcely in charity with you now, for the account you gave me of your staying with Mrs. Montagu till she was quite exhausted. It is treating her as children do a clockwork toy, which they never think has diverted them long enough till they have forced and broken all the springs. If you had left her at seven o'clock, a quiet evening might have prevented her feeling any inconvenience from a social dinner, and she might have afforded her friends many such cheerful days; but if she finds she cannot entertain them but at the hazard of her life, for their sakes as well as her own, I hope and believe her invitations will be very much restrained.

I am sorry to hear that you and Mrs. Handcock were not secured from the influenza by the storm. I hope by this time you are both perfectly free from it, as I had the pleasure of hearing you had it very slightly. It has been as general here as in town. Indeed it seems to have seized the whole globe. A person just now called on me, who is fallen away to a skeleton by the severe and various ways in which it has attacked her.

Have you seen Mrs. Crofton? She was fairly blown out of her cottage by the East wind, which attacked it with unmitigated fury, and made her pay the tax of a fine open summer prospect of the sea. Lady Lothian I believe will leave Walmer next

next week. I lately spent a most comfortable day with her, and came home by the sea-side, lighted by the moon-beams glimmering on the waves. I should have enjoyed this fine scenery more fully in a walk, but this her ladyship prevented with so much kindness, that I could not refuse being conveyed in her coach. I believe you will allow that one must be most desperately obstinate to resist Lady Lothian. You will be glad that the two poor little Fortescues ever since they came to England have been under her care. Her exemplary attention to the seven little creatures by whom she is surrounded throws a brighter lustre on her than all the gems in her coronet.

I read in the news, that Lucan had suffered by the storm of the 14th of October. I heartily wish it may not be true, but if it is, I am determined to hope that the wind has spared the trees and unroofed the house. Will you be so good as to let your servant carry the inclosed Letter to Mrs. Talbot? My affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock. A thousand thanks for your kindly wishing me in your neighbourhood. Very soon after Christmas I hope to be so happy as to be within reach of you. En attendant, adieu.

LETTER XCIV.

Deal, *May* 31, 1776.

THOUGH you will easily believe me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that I have thought on you with the most cordial affection every day, the unavoidable hurry on my first coming down, and a very bad fit of the head-ache in the midst of it, have left me very little leisure or capacity for writing. But my business has now got into tolerable order, and my head is for the present better, so I will no longer delay returning you and Mrs. Handcock my sincere thanks for all the delightful hours which you have allowed me to pass with you both this winter, a recollection which I can enjoy with unabated pleasure from the hope of its being renewed next year. My thoughts now have a determinate object, and can anticipate our meeting in Bolton-row, instead of pursuing you to unknown regions separated by the sea. With this prospect in view for the winter, I the less regret the not knowing where to look for you during the summer, as I find your schemes are still undecided. This I should think a lamentable circumstance for myself, but it is of very

very little consequence to you, who can always wave a fairy wand, which never fails to conjure up pleasures and amusements all round you, into whatever clime or whatever element you happen to be thrown. It can raise you up transparent palaces and coral groves beneath the sea, and convert a pigeon-house into a dressing-room, and a heap of brick and mortar into a walk of roses upon earth. You will have no need of these expedients, however, as long as Mrs. Montagu continues in town, but probably as soon as she is gone you will grow exceedingly weary of brick houses and a smoky air.

All that I have yet been able to enjoy of the country is in my own little garden, where I am planting geraniums and myrtles to repair as well as I can the terrible devastations of last winter, which destroyed nearly my whole collection. As you are acquainted with all possible authors, pray be so good as tell me who is the writer of a Letter to a young Nobleman setting out on his Travels. I found it here on my return, directed to me. If you should have an opportunity, I shall be much obliged to you if you will return my best thanks to the author for his favor to me, and still more for the noble and beneficial tendency of his work. Happy would it be for this nation if it was received with the attention which it deserves! Happy in all

events

events will it be for the author to have exerted his abilities and best endeavours to recommend to our young people of rank the only true standard of action, and to rescue them from the miserable nonsense and vile subversion of all principle, which are so industriously circulated by those who, without the least real pretensions, dignify themselves by the title of philosophers.

I must beg leave to trouble you with the enclosed to Miss Cooper, as I know not well how to direct to her. Adieu, my dear friend; pray let me hear from you soon, very soon, that you have not forgot your, &c.

LETTER XCV.

Deal, *June* 7, 1776.

It was no doubt out of pure revenge for my remonstrances against your waste of good coffee that you put my frugality to the trial about the frank. However, my dear Mrs. Vesey, as I know upon the whole it was kindly meant, I shall obey your

your injunctions of writing before the poor frank is proscribed.

I was much obliged by your Court intelligence, which was the first of any kind that I have received since I left London, and I longed to know a little how the world was going. Though I am very little *a party* in the said world, few people I believe are more attentive to it as *a spectator*, or receive more amusement from the shifting scenes. People whose interests and passions are engaged in the bustle have very little leisure to attend to the spectacle which affords such an entertainment to quiet uninterrupted observers, who content themselves with seeing the drama without any wish for the plumes and the tinsel, and the long trains of the actors.

In the midst of a bad fit of the head-ache yesterday I could not help regretting for you and Mrs. Handcock the wind and the rain, which must have interrupted part of your pleasure at South Lodge *. But then I comforted myself that when the company had nothing better to do they would sit round a table, and kindly think of and mention their absent friend. But after all, perhaps while the elements were fighting on this stormy coast, you might be enjoying calm skies and a bright sunshine, and

* Enfield Chace, then the seat of Miss Sharpe.

not

not finding a vacant minute to think about me; and yet perhaps I might have a better chance of being remembered in the quiet retreat of hamadryads than in your shining party this evening.

I hope you are by this time come to some determination for the summer, and such a one as is pleasant to you and Mrs. Handcock. When does Mr. Vesey talk of joining you? Or does he propose to abide by his bricks and mortar, and leave you to your own devices? In this case, I should think one of them might be to visit Miss Cooper and me.

Montagu is waiting for me to say his lesson, and the Post will be gone before I have finished my business, so I will only add my most affectionate love to you and Mrs. Handcock, and bid you adieu.

LETTER XCVI.

Deal, *June* 26, 1776.

You may probably, my dear Mrs. Vesey, have as early an account as I have from the continent; but as it is possible you may not, I will not defer giving you the pleasure of knowing that our friends are, I thank God, safely landed. I have this morning received this intelligence in a few lines from Montagu, which he wrote just as he got on shore. They were only two hours and ten minutes on their passage. The sea was very rough, and the wind pretty strong, and all of them heartily sick, except Mrs. Montagu and Mr. White. When Montagu wrote they were all going to bed, excessively wet. I hope we shall soon have a better account.

I went to Dover, according to Mrs. Montagu's appointment, on Friday, but did not find her there, so I staid till the next evening. I could have amused myself with the romantic views of that wild country if I had been able to ramble, but my head said no, and confined me to my room almost the whole of Saturday, and rendered every object

so unpleasant that I can scarcely bear to recollect the picture of the Castle, which was full in prospect of the window where I sat, so strong is the association of ideas. I had but just a glimpse of Mrs. Montagu, for she did not come till eight o'clock on Saturday, and I was to return to Deal that night. She was very well, and in very good spirits, and I believe much the better for giving herself two days' rest before she sat out.

I wrote to you the day before I received your last, and enclosed the account of Mr. Vesey's arms in Canterbury Cathedral*, which I hope arrived safely to you. Do pray write to me soon, and let me know your plans for the summer. I heartily congratulate you on Mr. Comyns's recovery. My affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock. Adieu, my dear friend. Heaven bless you.

* This Letter is missing.

LETTER XCVII.

Deal, *July* 15, 1776.

In spite of all impediments and obstructions in the way of writing, it is impossible for me to defer for a single Post my acknowledgments to you for your very kind present, which ought to be considered as one of the most extraordinary inventions of the present age. Its various uses give it a title to be esteemed in the artificial, what the cocoa-tree is in the natural, world; and you might, if you loved money, grow immensely rich by contracting to supply our fleets and armies with all the necessaries of life, except meat and drink, in the compass of a lady's work-bag. But of all its comprehensive excellencies, nothing endears it half so much to me as its being a proof of your affectionate remembrance of a friend who is happy in every instance of your kindness. As one is, however, pretty sure of finding some defect in every good, I sadly regretted the not finding your picture in the odd place you had chosen for it, at the bottom of the candlestick; and I could only comfort myself

with the reflection, that I should always be sure to find it at the bottom of my heart.

Miss Cooper arrived at Walmer on Saturday evening, and dined with me yesterday. She is much pleased with her cottage and with this country, and with my situation in it. She flatters me that it would please you as well as her. She has given me something like a faint hope that you may be tempted to make the trial yourself. I need not tell you how happy it would make me to see you and Mrs. Handcock. Travelling is good for you both, and your horses are engaged to carry you wherever you direct their heads. Do think about it, for 'tis as good to travel into Kent as to wander about other counties.

Every blessing of peace and security attend you in a place once the scene of so much devastation and terror. If you have any great reverence for the memory of our Saxon Kings, as I have, you will wander about the environs of Merton * in search of the spot where Ethelred and Alfred, with such noble though unsuccessful valour, defended

* Where Ethelred and Alfred defended the liberties of their country; their unworthy successor, who attempted to destroy them, was at length forced to confirm them and to ratify some of the wise laws of his Saxon predecessors. King John slept at Merton Abbey on the night before he signed Magna Charta.

their

their country against its brutal invaders; the only instance in which I am willing to allow that fighting makes a hero.

You have perfectly suppressed all curiosity which I should have felt for another view of West Wycombe Church if it had continued in its own state, by your description of the alteration which it has suffered from the raree-show genius of Lord Le Despenser. The want of taste is an uncomfortable defect, but a false taste is a positive evil. The one is only a quiet stupid dormouse, but the other is a mischievous monkey, which is perpetually tearing things out of their places and sitting them wrong. Nothing surely but the very perfection of false taste, the union of a blundering imagination and an unfeeling heart, could have tempted him to convert any part of a building appropriated to the solemnities of religion, to the riotous purposes of a drinking-room.

I believe you would have been pleased with an entertainment I lately found in one of my rambles, from the view of an old church sinking into venerable ruins, in a remote part of the country. It was so long since I had been there, and it stands so much out of the usual track of my walks, that I had some difficulty in finding it. There was something very striking in the circumstance by which I became sensible of my approach to it.

After

After travelling some time over an open down, from whence I had a distant view of the rude grandeur of Dover Castle, I was led into a narrow lane, and as I walked on, the shade grew closer, and the verdure was darkened by an intermixture of yews. From hence, by this solemn introduction, I was soon conveyed to the object of my pursuit *. Here I amused myself for some time in perfect solitude, amongst mouldering arches, ivyed walls, and thick-strewn graves, in all that composure of pleasing melancholy which scenes like these so naturally inspire.—Instead of this pleasing melancholy, what gloomy horrors and insupportable despair would darken the thoughts, from a view of the realms of death and ruin, if their devastations were to be considered as reducing things to a final state! It is only from a connection with future hopes that they convey such ideas of tranquillity and peace, as a kind of necessary relaxation from the toil and bustle of general life. But amidst the deep shade and awful silence that surround this temporary suspension of existence, the mind looks forward to that period when all shall revive to happier circumstances of being, and hears a glad voice proclaiming to the renovated world that time shall be no more.

* The ruins of West Langdon Church, between Deal and Dover.

I am

I am glad to find you so well pleased with my friend Miss Sharpe *, who will appear to more and more advantage when that extreme timidity, which the unhappy confinement of her education has brought on her is worn off by a more liberal mode of life. Her understanding is penetrating and lively, and her heart gentle and affectionate; but the long want of encouragement to cultivate the one, and of proper objects to exercise the feelings of the other, has given an habitual indolence and dejection to her spirits which cannot be immediately subdued, but I hope is every day gradually wearing off.

I had a Letter from Dr. Douglas † lately from Tunbridge, where he seems to be as little conversant with the human creatures on the walks as with the colts on the common. He bitterly regrets the not meeting you and Mrs. Dunbar there. My kind love to Mrs. Handcock. Miss Cooper has gone and begged my frank to you, so I write without one. Adieu!

* This Lady afterwards married the Rev. Osmund Beauvoir, D. D. and after his decease, Dr. Andrew Douglas, then a physician in town.

† Who was then husband to Mrs. Carter's youngest sister, and afterwards married the widow of Dr. Beauvoir, mentioned above.

LETTER XCVIII.

Deal, *Aug.* 21, 1776.

It is not usual for people to declare that they do a self-interested thing, and yet I will be silly enough to own, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that I should not have writ to you so soon but for the sake of availing myself of your awkward frank to enclose a Letter to Miss Foote. I hope this spiteful confession may help to evaporate my anger for your long silence, as well as if I had lengthened it on in a quieter manner through several weeks. Miss Cooper is as much scandalized at your detestable neglect of us as I am, but I will leave her to fight her own battles with you.

We were both extremely disappointed and in great wrath at your rejection of our darling scheme of Walmer Castle. But I suspect it is her fault. She probably represented it to you merely as a pleasant dwelling, where you might eat your dinner and drink your tea and coffee like the fashion of any modern house. If she had told you that some discontented spectre walked its melancholy round every night along the grass-grown platform, the attraction

traction would have been irresistible to your curiosity. I think she might possibly have succeeded, even if she had been contented to describe the operations of elementary beings on this ancient structure. She might have told you how the spirits of the air talk in whistling winds through its battlements, and how the angel of the waters dashes the roaring billows at its foot. Instead of alluring you by these sublime ideas, I suspect she dwelt chiefly on the pleasure you would confer upon a couple of mere two-legged human creatures; upon which you turned about and said, "Why, Mrs. Handcock, we can meet enough of these upon the pantiles;" and so the die turned up for Tunbridge—for which we are very sorry that your vixen countrywoman did not beat you.

I had a Letter a few days ago from Mrs. Montagu, and, I thank God, she and her party are all well. She makes me very happy by the manner in which she speaks of my nephew. I hope your apprehensions for Mrs. Hughes are happily vanished, and that Dr. Douglas has been as satisfactory to you in her case as in Mr. Comyns. I had a Letter from Lady Dartrey lately, dated Antwerp. She desired me to let you know that she loved you, they were all very well, and greatly amused.

If you make use of the conveyance of my Letter

to

to get acquainted with Miss Foote * and her sister, Mrs. Ross, I may venture to affirm that you will thank me for the commission. With my love to Mrs. Dunbar, be so good as to tell her that the beings whom in so many instances she resembles do not, that ever I heard, break their promises.

Never, I think, do I remember such a long course of damp relaxing weather, and I have, of course, suffered much from a weak state of nerves. All that I can do is to struggle against the evil, which I cannot help feeling, and to oblige myself to use exercise when the languor and weariness which perpetually hangs on me tempts me so strongly to sit still. But as nothing is more fatal to the health of either than a habit of yielding to indolence of body or mind, one ought quietly to endure the pain of opposition, en attendant, that a more favorable disposition of the elements will render the combat less laborious. I hope you have not suffered in the same degree by this relaxing temperament of air, though there is scarcely any health so impenetrable but it must have been in some way affected by it.

* A highly accomplished and elegant young woman, daughter to Mr. Foote, of Charlton, near Canterbury. She died unmarried. Mrs. Ross was well known afterwards in London by the name of Lady Herries. She died lately at Cheltenham.

Miss

Miss Cooper dined with me to-day. Poor soul she has had many an uncomfortable walk during this vile weather; which has sometimes been too bad for even her courage to encounter. The total relaxation of my nerves has occasioned a weakness in one of my ancles, that I have but seldom been able to reach as far as Walmer. My love to Mrs. Handcock, and beg she will not omit her walks which agreed so well with her last year. Adieu! your's much more affectionately than your abominable long silence deserves.

LETTER XCIX.

Deal, *Oct.* 7, 1776.

You must think me strangely unreasonable if you could suppose that your sincerity could give me any impressions to your disadvantage. On the contrary I highly honor it. It is not at all difficult, I think, to comprehend the situation of your mind with regard to the subject you mention. The heart is a very obstinate kind of thing, and very little disposed to be reasoned out of its feelings. Virtue indeed must always force esteem, and obli-

gations

gations have an indispensable claim to gratitude; but virtue, poor imperfect human virtue! may be accompanied by such disagreeable faults, and obligations blemished by such teizing circumstances, that though right principles will always discharge the debt of reverence to the one, and of every possible return to the other, the heart will be vexed and disappointed at finding itself neither warmed by the spirit of inclination, nor softened by tenderness of affection.—But you suspect that certain faults have made too strong an impression on you for want of a fellow feeling. I am too much influenced by this kind of partiality myself: we are both in the wrong, and we both endeavour to mend. Considered in a right view, our fellow feelings for all faults ought to be the same. Whether they are our own, or those of a very different kind in others, they are all deviations from that perfect rule of conduct, to which we are obliged by continual improvement, as near as possible, to approach; and they spring from the same erring nature of which we all equally partake. If I am silly enough to quit my proper road in pursuit of a flower that happens to attract my fancy on the right hand, I have certainly no cause to quarrel with others, who perhaps may gravely chuse to run their noses into a furze-bush by straggling to the left. It makes no difference that I happen to be seduced by the pret-

tier

tier object, since we both equally wander from the path in which we are appointed to walk.

The world in general is very unjust in its different estimation and different treatment of human failings. That bewitching charm, which engages us to characters distinguished by affectionate dispositions, and gentle manners, renders us partially indulgent to their faults, as their ill consequences to society are usually more remote, and less personally felt, than those that accompany harsher natures, against which every body denounces open war, because every body is liable to be immediately affected by them. Yet if it be considered how often the disposition which is troublesome and teizing to others, scratches and tears the poor owner, it would appear to be a case more worthy of compassion than we are usually willing to allow. After all, when one reflects upon the comprehensive scheme of human duty, and on the difficulties by which it is perplexed amidst such a variety of temptations, every character which, in the general conduct of life, evidently appears to be influenced by right principles, and a view to the divine approbation, is upon the whole to be considered with reverence and respect; and its infirmities and defects to be treated as consequences of that general imperfection, which in some instance or other is absolutely

absolutely unavoidable from the condition of our present existence.

You never mentioned to me any Letters of Lady Lucan. I shall be much obliged to you for the sight of them.

Pray whenever your imagination represents to you that you have writ me a Letter, do teach mine to be equally ingenious in supposing I have received it. For want of this necessary faculty, and from the unhappy prejudice of judging by matters of fact, I have been grievously hurt, at finding myself so entirely out of your remembrance, as it happens to be a certain truth that till within these three days I have not heard a syllable from you addrest to myself for more weeks than I wish to recollect. You did indeed write to Miss Cooper, and express yourself pleased with my two friends, whom I was desirous to introduce to your acquaintance, and it gave me pleasure to find you were not disappointed in the expectations I had given you of them. But to that Letter in which I mentioned them to you, I never received any answer. Mrs. Ross and Miss Foote wrote me their thanks in very lively expressions, for their introduction to you; and I had a repetition of them last Wednesday, when I payed them a visit. Poor Miss Foote is still in the same melancholy state of health, which incapacitates her

for

for every exertion of her very fine talents.—Pray did you ever attend to Mrs. Ross's language; it appears to me remarkably proper and elegant?

While I made this visit, I left Miss Cooper en dépôt with a friend on the other side the country, who for many years lived within a short walk of Deal, when I used to see her very often, but her removal beyond the circles of my rambles, now gives me but few opportunities of seeing her. She inhabits an old mansion house, which is spacious without looking uncomfortable, and venerable without being dull *. The house, I believe, was formerly part of a monastery: but modern elegance, the great foe to ancient greatness, and grandeur, and solemnity, has almost entirely banished all remains of its former appearance, except a few gothic doors, which have hitherto resisted all reformation. Even in the Church which joins the house, the pillars are new cased with wood, and joined by circular arches, to the infinite scandal of my gothic enthusiasm. It has been, I believe, a very considerable cathedral building, as it is evidently much diminished; and there is an inscription on one of the tombstones as early as the thirteenth century. The garden be-

* Wingham House, then the seat of Mrs. Cosnan, who was one of the daughters of Sir Thomas D'Aeth, Bart. and one of Mrs. Carter's earliest friends. The Poem which begins "Say dear Berthia," was addressed to her.

longing to this house is flat and enclosed; but at the bottom of it there is a gloomy avenue covered with grass, which leads to a delightful pretty stream, the banks of which are finely shaded by beautiful limes, which form a very charming walk, and between the trees one discovers many picturesque objects on the opposite side the river. The day luckily proved extremely fine, and Miss Cooper enjoyed it very much. I got back time enough from my visit to Mrs. Ross to dine with her at Wingham, and we got home very tolerably early, so we made the most of our twelve hours.

Mrs. Montagu did not leave Paris on the fifth, but she writes me word that she is to set out on the seventh. I rejoice her journey is by land, and not by water, for it blows and rains, à toute outrance. You kindly enquire after my nephew Montagu, to my great happiness Mrs. Montagu mentions him in all her Letters with the highest marks of commendation and approbation. I thank God I never had the least reason to doubt that he would give her any cause to repent of the kindness she has been so good as to shew, or of the affection she kindly expresses for him. I propose to go to Dover on Friday in hopes to catch a glimpse of our friend, and bring home my nephew, who I hope will remain with me at Deal till I come to town. All his family are at present with my brother, and the

Dr. and Mrs. Douglas, so we make a strong party, which sometimes does my heart more good than my head. They are all to dine with me to-morrow, and Miss Cooper, you will easily imagine, is not to be left out of the set.

Miss Sharpe is returned to us in charming health, and without the least regret at leaving Paris. She has more company with her at present than my table will hold; but she is to join us in the afternoon, and it would do your heart good to see what a croud we shall make in my little room.—Oh that you and Mrs. Handcock could be transported into the midst of it. My love to Mrs. Handcock, Miss Cooper would send her's to you both if she was here, but this tempest confines her to her cottage, or she was to have been with Miss Sharpe this afternoon. I walked to her this morning before the weather changed. Very comfortably for us, however, she is not often restrained by the weather, as Miss Sharpe's coach conveys her through it, but it had been to-day to Margate.

I declared in my fury at your long silence that I would not write to you in three months; and so I have writ to you in three days, not only a Letter but a volume, for which I deem myself very silly, but it being by no means the first instance, I cannot say I feel much surprized at it. I heartily rejoice to hear you are able to walk and feel the

pleasure of independance, as well as the free enjoyment of the charming views of Tunbridge. God bless you! Good night.

LETTER C.

Deal, *Oct.* 13, 1776.

In proof of my entire compliance with the wishes of your heart, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I carried pen and paper in my pocket yesterday to Dover, that if our friends should be arrived I might have the pleasure of giving you the most immediate information: but the wind was against us and I returned back to Deal in the evening. I have sent to get some information this morning, and find the vessel is expected to arrive about five, so I propose to set out again in hopes of getting a glimpse of our friend, and of bringing back my boy. The weather is so very placid that, I thank God, there does not appear the least reason for any particular alarm, and I hope I shall close my Letter, with the account of their being all safe and well on the Kentish shore; and may they all bring back English

lish hearts, and English manners, in which wish I trust you are not too well bred to join me: though to be sure the French envelope is rather a discouraging symptom, since in every other circumstance but that it is French, it is as completely disagreeable, awkward, and inconvenient, as it is possible for mortal envelope to be.

Pray do not pay any civility, or give the least encouragement to any head-ache that visits you as my acquaintance; but shake it off au plustôt as an impostor. For my head-ache can always prove an alibi whenever it is accused of being absent from me, so much as any one hour together, in any one day.

Though you are too much an American to rejoice in the conquest of Long Island, you are however too much a friend to humanity, not to feel thankful, that it has been carried with so little loss on the side of our troops. I heartily wish it could have been accomplished with as little on the side of the poor misled provincials. God grant this check may incline them to listen to proposals of peace. It grieves me to see a Lieutenant Morgan amongst the wounded; I fear it is the nephew of our friends. Be so good as to let me know when you write, and whether he is likely to recover. I will study your heraldry, or get somebody who

knows more of the matter to study it, before I come to town.

Though I cannot claim even an acquaintance with Mr. S. Jenyns I must defend him, though I would much rather he would have prevented my attack by such an explication as would have rendered it less possible to mistake his meaning. Yet even as it now stands, he seems to have sufficiently discovered that he cashiers no other valour, than that which from false and wicked ideas of honor and glory stabs individuals, and desolates whole nations: no other friendship but such an exclusive affection as subverts general benevolence: and no other patriotism but such as serves for a mask to ambition, and from the influence of private passions tends to throw the state into discord and confusion. Mr. Jenyns in the consideration of not loading the attention of those whom he chiefly meant to benefit by his book, has too often exprest himself with a conciseness which renders his meaning obscure.

I wrote to you about a week ago. I shall not seal this Letter till I come from Dover, in my way I shall call to know if Miss Cooper has any particular message to send you. Miss Sharpe and Mrs. Pennington are going to her this morning, she is in no danger of finding her cottage too solitary: so I hope she will not be in a hurry to quit it.

Returned from Dover disappointed of the pleasure I had hoped for. Only think of my standing on the beach watching three vessels just landing their passengers, and being at last informed by the Captain of the third, that Mrs. Montagu was not at Calais, nor proposed to be there till after the twentieth. He said, he believed, she was prevented by the want of horses. I returned heavily back again, and at my arrival at home found a Letter from you, which has helped to comfort me. Your description of Bay Hall*, retouched the picture of it in my memory, and gave it new spirit and fresh colouring. The history piece was entirely new to me, for I saw neither the venerable old Lady, nor her rosy companion, whom you have so excellently well drawn.

All your friends here, which are at present a party almost big enough to fill your blue room, mention you very frequently, con amore, and desire to be remembered kindly to you and Mrs. Handcock. My two sisters and their families talk of leaving us soon, but I have better hopes of Miss Cooper and Miss Sharpe. You must not send us

* An ancient mansion near Tunbridge, once the original seat of the great family of Colepeper, and since of the Amhersts. It now belongs to Mr. Streatfield, of Chidingstone, and being no longer inhabited by the owner is tending fast to decay.

any

any more of Sir William Mayne's covers, for he cannot frank for Lord Newhaven, but is to all intents and purposes a nonentity. Adieu, my dear friend, you cannot think how well I love you, and how grateful I feel to you, for the kindness of sending me a second Letter before you knew the first was answered.

LETTER CI.

Deal, *Oct.* 16, 1776.

To my happiness, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I can at last give you the pleasure of knowing that our friend and all her party arrived, I thank God, very safely last night on the English shore. I set out for Dover this morning with the sun, and was not again disappointed. She talked about writing to you, but as she was to call on her brothers*, and would be good part of the day in motion, I undertook to give you the news of her arrival. She

* The Rev. William Robinson at Denton Court; and Charles Robinson, Esq. at Canterbury, Recorder of that City, which he also represented in three Parliaments.

seems

seems well and in spirits, I breakfasted with her at a friend's at Dover. We parted before one, and I have brought back my dear Montagu, who I hope will remain with me till I go to town. Mr. Montagu talks of going to Sandleford if the fine weather holds. I find no joy of the heart can cure an aching head. This is the third day I have had pretty severe pain. So I can only add my affectionate love. Adieu.

LETTER CII.

Deal, *Dec.* 9, 1776.

INDEED, my dear Mrs. Vesey, it did seem quite an age since I had received any intimation of my being in your thoughts. I am heartily sorry that it is the pain you receive from writing which kept you so long silent. I look forward with great pleasure to the time when all we have to communicate to each other may be comprized in a twisted Note.

I am obliged to you for the concern you express for me on the subject of our late shock. Perhaps you

you may have felt an earthquake: if not, I am not inclined to wish for one *a votre intention*, but as it passed happily over, I have often wished you had been with Montagu and me on Thursday morning. I have felt one before; but it was nothing compared to this. Never did I experience so sublime an effect of the voice and of the hand of Omnipotence. This awful exertion was mercifully checked within the boundary that marks destruction: but I should think its continuance for a few more seconds would have produced fatal effects. It seemed as if the pillars of heaven, and the foundations of the earth were convulsed. The wild tumult and hurry of the elements were as much beyond all description, as the confusion of my thoughts, for I had no explicit idea till I was awaked to a more distinct sense by Montagu's hastily uttering "an earthquake." As this house is very much exposed, and we were up stairs sitting perfectly still, as he was reading to me; I suppose we felt it in its full force. God be thanked no mischief was done either in this town or any of the others along this coast. The direction seems to have been North and South, and I believe it was very faintly felt in the London road. My brother's servant, however, perceived it near Canterbury, and his horses snorted and trembled, and he could scarcely get them on.

Like

Like you I am just now disposed to struggle with the "chain of causes and effects" which is going to drag me for two or three days from home: and I feel great reluctance even for that short time to quit my own tranquil house. But after all I believe it is much better both for you and me that such a chain there is, to prevent an unbounded indulgence of our own inclinations; which might too probably lead us into such dispositions as would indeed leave us at full liberty to sit down quiet once for all, and no mortal would wish to interrupt our repose. But I believe we should not either of us be much at our ease in such an absolute vacation of heart; so we must even take things as they happen, and submit to that constitutional languor and ennui, which will sometimes make one feel weary of the exertions necessary to any commerce with the world, for the sake of those advantages of society without which we could not be happy. I hope the gaiety and spirit of youth are not absolutely necessary and requisite to enable one to please, or to be pleased, unless one was to converse only with the young and with the gay. The tranquillity of contentment, and the warmth of social affection will at every age produce the power of pleasing and of being pleased.

Miss Sharpe and I carried your Letter to Miss Cooper this morning; she has been very well the last

last two days, but her health in general, poor soul, has been very uncomfortable for the whole summer. I heartily wish the climate had agreed as well with her as Miss Sharpe, who is grown so hardy as to face all our storms and blustering weather, which for the last ten days have been pretty outrageous, except on the morning of the earthquake, which rose in a dismal gloomy calm.

You ask me what I thought of our dear Mrs. Montagu's looks at Dover. She appeared to me pale and thin, but not yellow and sickly; I fear we must not expect to see her fresh and plump while she meets with so many wicked seductions in the society of the great world.

Miss Cooper says she will answer your Letter very soon. My love to Mrs. Handcock; I am obliged to you for your account of Princess Daschow. It might have been a happy symptom for her if she had felt a sympathy with you some years ago. I hope to have an opportunity of making your speeches to Mrs. Pennington in an hour or two, as I expect her here this afternoon for a few days. Adieu.

LETTER CIII.

Tunstal, *May 26*, 1777.

Am not I in the right, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, in supposing you would be glad to hear from me as soon as I could find a minute's time? In this confidence I will not defer assuring you of my kindest remembrance till I am got to the end of my journey, when I shall probably find more avocations than I have at present.

How strongly do I feel the obligations I owe you, when I recollect the many happy hours of unreserved friendship that I have passed with you and Mrs. Handcock for the last delightful winters. And yet, strange as it may appear, I never parted with you with so little regret. As it is very certain that I never loved you better than I do at present, this tranquillity would be absolutely unaccountable, if I did not feel an inexplicable kind of presentiment that we shall soon meet again, and I am determined to indulge it, though I should perhaps be at a loss to define upon what idea this hope is founded. To act merely from feeling is always dangerous, and often wrong: but to encourage a pleasing expecta-

tion,

tion, even if it should be disappointed, renders the event no worse when it does happen, and precludes all the intermediate pain.

All this family are much your's. Mrs. Pennington conveyed me from Dartford to this place on Saturday, and my nephews are to escort me to Canterbury to-morrow, and from thence my brother is to convey me to Deal in the evening. There is something very pleasant in being thus successively taken up by my own family, and I feel it with great joy and thankfulness. I well remember in our early infancy the difficulties which the best of parents struggled through, and the self-denials he practised in providing for our support and education. By the blessing of heaven on his cares, he lived to see all his children prosperous in their own situation, and in their several ways contributing to the happiness of each other. I will not apologize to you for these reflexions. A good mind will feel them to be very natural, and a friend like you will rejoice in them.

Pray send me some franks for yourself. I hope you will soon give me an account of your present situation, and, as far as you can guess, of your future plans.

LETTER CIV.

Deal, *June* 7, 1777.

It is quite uncomfortable to me, my dear friend, to find you are still detained in London, which, in its present solitude, must appear like a sepulchre haunted by the ghosts of all your departed friends. The misfortune too is, that amidst the avocations of disagreeable mere mortal business of preparing for a journey, they can only just glide by you, and give you no idea but of their loss. When you are quietly reposing in the shades of Lucan, your imagination will be at full leisure to stop the fleeting phantoms, and converse with them at your ease.

You say that Mr. Vesey still talks of returning again after Christmas. If he should continue in this determination, I hope you will not put any discouragement on this near hope, for the sake of a more distant prospect. Consider, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that at your age and mine, the more immediate good is the most valuable; and we can reasonably place but little dependance on any remote hopes, except those which extend beyond the

the circuit of the sun. I take it for granted that by after Christmas Mr. Vesey means immediately after: for your friends would think themselves grievously defrauded if you did not visit them till spring. No: I must hope that we shall enjoy the delightful social hours of winter together, not like the soi-disant philosophers whom you mention, puzzling plain truth by the vanity of perplexed systems; but conversing with the simplicity of an honest heart, regulated by right principles, and enlivened by the playfulness of an innocent imagination *.

I am flattered to find that I agree with Mr. Burke.—Yes, ask your own heart, and it will tell you what is the rule of life that best directs it to grow wise and good, and happy. Be thankful for this gracious guidance, and never listen to the half learning, the perverted understanding, and pert ridicule of French philosophers, and beaux esprits, who would persuade you it is best to wander over a wide stormy ocean without a pilot, and without a leading star. Indeed I hope that the first opportunity will bring you acquainted with Mr. Smelt. He is an honour to human nature, and possesses

* How delightful a picture of the true "feast of reason and the flow of soul," fit for the society of angels in a better state, and yet such as the good may enjoy in this!

both

both the severest and gentlest virtues to a very uncommon degree. Pray have you read a poem called Sympathy *? If not, pray do, and get the last edition.

Be so good when you write, to mention how Miss Cooper does, and if Tunbridge agrees with her. My love to dear Mrs. Handcock, and tell her how gratefully I feel her kindness. I am glad you have both been to see my child †, and that she has been with you. I am sure the more you see of her the better you will like her. Adieu, my dear friend, I hope by this time you have got rid of the pain in your head, without any assistance from " the mysterious wigs." Write to me soon, very soon, and be sure to preserve to me the same place in your heart.

* By Mr. Pratt, author of " Gleanings," and many other works, both in verse and prose.

† Miss Sharpe, who wished to be considered by her in that light.

LETTER CV.

Deal, *June* 27, 1777.

It grieves me my dearest Mrs. Vesey, to find that your spirits are so low, and your situation so uncomfortable. I hope however that the gloom which at present hangs over your prospects will in a good degree be dispelled, when the disagreeable hurry and fatigue of preparation for your journey is over. You ask what you shall do in the perplexing affair of * * * * *
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—All this may be perhaps a mere dream, but it is a sober waking truth, that it is infinitely important for you to try the possibility, both on his account and your own, as whatever be the event, with which we are not concerned, such a trial would afford the most delightful reflection to your own mind. And suppose the worst, that it does not succeed to your wish; in a world liable to such hourly vicissitudes, the best actions must meet with frequent disappointments, in their immediate effects: but happily their

their principle is secured beyond the reach of human events, and their consequeuces are eternal.

Why will you not allow me to indulge the delightful hope of your return to England next winter, when Mr. Vesey seems to continue so fixed in his design? At least I hope you will say nothing to oppose it. You say it cannot be: but without assigning any reason, which makes me hope that your despondency is an effect of the present disorder of your spirits.

I can easily imagine what you must have felt the day you was at Richmond. But comfort yourself in the hope that your friend enjoys a fairer Paradise then any which her imagination, even assisted by your's, could enable her to form, in a climate where winter rifles every tree, and withers every flower, and where even the fairest summers are exposed to sudden blasts.

In spite of your dreams I have not, I thank God, been in any distress. I shall be happy to hear that the distress of your own spirits is removed, which raised the unpleasant phantoms. The solitary life I have led since I came here will soon grow more social, as I expect a friend from town to pass some time with me, to-morrow: and on Tuesday I hope Miss Sharpe will convey her-

self and Montagu to me, I have been very fortunate in getting a house for her, nearer to my own than your's is in Clarges-street.

My kind love to Mrs. Handcock. I cannot help feeling as if she would rather wish, after having well crammed the peacocks and sparrows at Lucan during the whole summer, to return to her friends in England, and regale them with coffee and plumb cakes in the winter. Indeed, indeed, my heart will most anxiously long for you both. I have the happiness to find by every Letter from Mrs. Montagu, that she continues quite well. Adieu my dear friend, do pray write to me as often as you can, and always give me an account of your situation, which I think you must believe to be the most interesting subject you can write on, to, &c.

LETTER CVI.

Deal, *July* 24, 1777.

THOUGH I am but this moment risen from my pillow, and fit for nothing but to return to it again, I cannot be quiet, my dear Mrs. Vesey, with the thoughts of your leaving England without receiving my wishes of a pleasant and prosperous journey and voyage. With what different feelings should I form these wishes if you were setting out from Ireland! But I will not give up the hopes of your return next winter: though alas you give me but very little reason to cherish it.

Miss Sharpe is well, and desires her love to you and Mrs. Handcock. If you cannot find room for the parrot, it may be sent to Bloomsbury-square, with a direction to the servant who is there, to send it to South Lodge. I hope your anxiety about Mrs. Handcock is merely the effects of your low spirits: as I have often seen you express the same solicitude last winter, when she appeared to to me, upon the whole, in better health than for many preceding ones.

I was very glad to see by the papers that the Irish Seas are to be so well guarded. Be so good

as to remember me kindly to Mr. Vesey, who I hope will keep firm to his purpose for next winter. Adieu, my dear friend. God defend you from all dangers, and restore you to us safely again at the promised time. I know you will give me as early information as you can of your being safe landed. My head is so bad I can add no more, than Heaven preserve you.

LETTER CVII.

Deal, *Aug.* 30, 1777.

ALAS, my dear friend, how different is the feeling with which I now take up my pen, from that of the last delightful years! I could then address you at the distance of a few turnpike miles, and even that distance was lessened by the gay hope of being soon situated within a few doors of each other! Now "mountains rise, and oceans roll between" us. Had I any determinate expectation of your return on which to fix my mind, all these intermediate objects would vanish into air.

But

But at present they stand full in my way, and my imagination painfully stretches itself to discern you at an immense lontananza: and all the pleasures which I so lately enjoyed in a nearer view, fade away into thin ineffectual wishes. Yet the hours which we spent together are not cancelled, or shuffled away amongst the rubbish of mere common every day life. Surely the pleasure of disinterested affection, and its noblest effect, the wish and endeavour of mutual improvement, are too congenial with the soul to be obliterated, like the idle amusements to which it has no natural relation.

Indeed I believe that very much of the solicitude which we feel for those we love, might be avoided if we would divest ourselves of the idle prejudice that the ideas of others are to be determined by the same standard as our own. After all, excepting the sine quâ non of a good conscience, and an exemption from the real calamities of life, that strange odd thing which in a world like this we call happiness, entirely depends upon the temper and the imagination of every individual: and as "the heart knows its own bitterness," so, "a stranger does not intermeddle with its joys." Upon this principle I comfort myself that the way of life, which would harass and perplex my aching head, and indolent disposition, with perpetual agitation and cares, serves only to keep some of my friends

in

in good humour and good spirits. These reflections flowed from my pen, as I was thinking of the marriage of one of my friends in this place, and as such you have them, in some respects they may serve for you and me; every situation has its duties, its charms, its sorrows, and disquietudes, and the well regulated mind will bend in humble gratitude for the blessings; and receive the crosses as a due chastisement of the impatience we are too apt to shew, when the world does not go exactly as we like.

I read the account of your accident a few days ago in the papers: and though there was at the same time an assurance that no mischief, God be thanked, followed from it, I was heartily glad to receive a confirmation of it from yourself. I am very glad Mrs. Handcock bore her journey so well, my love to her, and my grateful thanks for all her kindnesses. I long at this minute to ask her a question, but it cannot be wafted across St. George's channel; do not weary yourself with conjecturing what it may be, for it is not concerning you, but something entirely between her and me.

Miss Sharpe will feel much gratified by your kind remembrance of her, she is somewhere on the road between Exeter and Bristol. She wrote me a charming description of Stourhead. I beg my kind compliments to Mr. Vesey; they will be still

kinder

kinder if you can give me any encouragement to hope that he continues his resolution of your returning to us soon after Christmas: but, alas, it is impossible you could be persuaded of this without giving me the happiness of naming it. Adieu, my dear friend. God bless and preserve you. Will you write to me soon?

LETTER CVIII.

Deal, *Oct.* 2, 1777.

By this time, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I hope you have recovered the ill effects of your imprudence, and are enjoying the reward of it, by the contemplation of some beautiful picture which it has left in your memory: for I will not believe you would run such a hazard for any common object. If the sun danced on the Liffy, and gilded the groves of Lucan in some new and singular manner, I can conceive your temptation and pity your frailty, while I applaud Mrs. Handcock's virtue. You would have been worthy to share the pleasure which Miss Sharpe and I felt the other day in one of our airings. A long shady lane, which

which led we knew not whither, conveyed us at the end of it to a little country church, with a spire steeple, and a set of cottages intermixed with trees, which formed quite a poetical landscape: and was the more pleasing from the surprize, and from the contrast to an open unpeopled country through which we had passed just before. We wander a great deal over this charming country, which she finds delightful. At some times we sit on the shore, or in my airy little room, where we watch all the colouring of the clouds, and the effect of their reflection on the sea, which form a variety both of the sublime and beautiful, which, except to those who live within the constant view of it, must be absolutely inconceivable. When the dark months of the closing year shut up our theatre, I hope we shall enjoy the society of our assembled friends in London. I need not say how much and how truly my heart grieves that my friends in Bolton-row will not be of the number. I could not help feeling the blow, by which you defeated all my hopes on that head, though you had before taught me to expect it. But I am persuaded your reasons are unanswerable; and ardently as I wish for your society, I could not enjoy it, at the expence of your acting in any way inconsistent with your duties. So I will console myself for the loss of your conversation, by the reflection that you are acting

as

as you ought: a reflection that will be felt beyond the period of present enjoyments. May you and Mrs. Handcok enjoy your solitary winter at Lucan, in tranquillity and cheerfulness! Indeed I should think it would prove greatly preferable to the hurry of mixed company, in which the heart can take so little share; for surely of all the teizing exercises to the spirit, there are few so wearying as that of mere mechanical uninteresting talking; unless indeed you consider it in the same light as a friend of mine did, who said, "she looked upon it as a wholesome kind of mortification, and opposition to the bent of her own mind." It is very fit that in the commerce of the world there should happen some occasions of exercising the benevolence which is due to good kind of people, whose general merit may entitle them to great regards, though their train de vie, and their amusements, are ever so disagreeable to one's own particular taste.

I am enchanted with the situation of your dressing room, and your moral application of the objects with which it is furnished, will render it a better school of virtue, than the hermit's hour-glass and bones, over which he sits dreaming over the end of life, while you are endeavouring to discipline the passions, and conquer the temptations of the intermediate passage: which is the proper exercise of a social and accountable being. I believe that there

there is not the least reason to suspect that a late sudden and very disastrous accident was any thing besides an accident. At least I have never heard any such suspicion: and all the accounts of it are so consistent, and the circumstances so unvaried, as give not the shadow of reason to suppose it voluntary.

Every body seems very impatient for important news from America; for my own part, I have so little hope of any good to the public by such a quarrel, that I chiefly wish intelligence for the sake of the poor people who are anxious for their friends. Oh that they were all safe in England! I felt for the Miss Clerkes *, when I read in the papers, that General Burgoyne was going to storm a place. It is terrible to be kept in suspence about the event, till another express can cross the Atlantic. But perhaps they are like Mrs. Fielding, wise enough never to look into a newspaper. Miss Clerke sets out on Tuesday with Miss Sharpe for a tour of some weeks; I wish I could shew you two beautiful drawings she took for me on the spot, of Ivybridge and Glastonbury Abbey. I have nothing now to tell you of myself, my head goes on as

* Sisters to Sir Francis Clerke, Bart. an officer in Gen. Burgoyne's army. He died of his wounds after the unfortunate affair of Saratoga.

usual;

usual; and I am thankful to have no worse evil, amidst the various ills that "flesh is heir to." Adieu, my dear friend. God bless and preserve you.

LETTER CIX.

Deal, *Oct.* 30, 1777.

INDEED, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I am not in such good society as you suppose me. I have lost my sister Pennington and family, and Dr. and Mrs. Douglas have just left my brothers; so that at present my family is reduced to myself and one solitary damsel, the other being gone into Hampshire to visit her friends. On Saturday I hope to be a little more sociable, as my nephew Montagu, who spends most part of his time with me, is to return, after having been entered at Trinity College, Oxford. He will be a young student, for he is not yet 15; but his brothers went to the University as early, and, I thank God, with great credit to their friends and themselves. I think there are great advantages in their going so young.

Such

Such a day and night as the last will sweep away much of the autumnal beauty of the country. We had here a violent tempest of wind and rain all last night, and it continues blowing very hard still, so that even I cannot put my nose out of doors. Perhaps though I should venture (even at the risque of having my cap and bonnet blown to the Goodwins, notwithstanding the largest pins I can find to fasten them) as I love the elements, if the storm did not make such fearful work with my poor aching head.

Mr. M. Robinson's death was a great loss to the family, and our friend felt it very severely, though, thank God, her health has not suffered materially by it. His second son * is happily provided for, for Mrs. Montagu is as fond of him as if he was her own son. The eldest † will in all appearance be heir to the family title and estate.

Surely these strong south-west winds will blow us some news from America. I have no very good public hopes, but one wishes heartily that private families may receive some account of their friends. My affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock. My head will allow of no more. Adieu!

* Now Mr. Montagu. † Now Lord Rokeby.

LETTER CX.

Deal, *Dec.* 4, 1777.

It did indeed give me all the pleasure you could wish or suppose, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to receive a Letter from you in such a style of cheerful tranquillity and comfortable hopes. My heart must and will feel your absence with many a tender regret this winter; but it would be much less supportable if I had not the happiness to consider it as a consequence of your acting in a manner conformable to your obligations. On this solid rock we may stand and look forward with unalloyed pleasure to the prospect of our next meeting, when I trust we shall enjoy our delightful parties with a spirit unclouded by any of those uneasy reflections which must cast a gloom over the brightest sunshine of life, whenever inclination is preferred to duty. En attendant the more active pleasure of our social hours, may the best and most important reflections tranquillize your mind, and the happiest recollections of friendship soothe your heart, and the brightest visions of poetical imagination vary and enliven your solitude, and give spirit as well as sentiment

sentiment to your tête-a-têtes with dear Mrs. Handcock.

You charge me with sending you our storms, but I hope that which we felt here last Saturday evening has not travelled to you. I do not recollect ever to have beheld such lightening, or to have heard such a burst of thunder, which, to complete the tempest, was succeeded by a hurricane. As at the time there was nobody in the house but myself and my maids, and as we are not in a street, I did not know then into what a consternation the town was thrown, but from all accounts there never was so general an alarm; and indeed it has been the subject of conversation ever since. God be thanked, no mischief was done, which is a great mercy, considering the danger. A gentleman of the navy, who drank tea with us yesterday, told me that though he had been in thunder and lightening under the line, he never knew any so violent as this; and a sailor belonging to one of the ships in the Downs told Mrs. Douglas, that he had never in any part of the world met with any at all like it, and added, that he every minute expected the ship would have been set on fire; so from all these testimonies both by sea and land there is great reason for us to be thankful that in such a region of flame nobody was hurt. Indeed the weather is still tempestuous, and last

last night Miss Sharpe and I wished much for you in my little airy abode, round which all the elements play with the most uninterrupted liberty, it standing quite open on three sides, with a very wide space in front, where there is not any thing to shelter it. You would have enjoyed the solemn concert, to which by a cheerful fire we listened with so much rapture. The whistling wind, the beating rain, and dashing waves, fully convinced us that winter, that has been so long delayed, was come; for November has been gilded by the smiles of May.

There has scarcely been a day in which the airings we have taken did not furnish us with some beautiful views. I wish you could have accompanied us; I think you would be pleased with this country. It has one advantage beyond any I ever recollect to have seen, the charming variety of the ground and the intersection of the hills; sometimes opening a view of the sea, sometimes to a shaded village, and sometimes a solitary cottage, which seems retired to an infinite distance from the rest of the habitable world. Miss Sharpe desires me to tell you, with her love, that she is in hopes of purchasing the Clock-house and little farm, at Mill-hill, and shall want you extremely to assist her in its improvements, and to make good the reality of the river, which at present lies undiscovered by

vulgar

vulgar prosaic eyes. I heartily wish she may get this place, which she seems so anxious about. She has a natural aversion to pomp, and finery, and grandeur, and consequently loves simplicity, comfort, and the ornaments of poetical imaginations; so I think such a place as she describes this to be will exactly suit her.

I hope Mrs. Handcock keeps tolerably free from rheumatism; to be entirely free from it cannot be hoped either for her or me, or any body else of whom it has once taken possession.

Dispatches are at last arrived from General Howe. I am persuaded he has done as much as could be done; but to me there appears to be nothing decisive, nothing likely to produce the only event that will be of real advantage—a peace. It makes one shudder to think of the blood so unprofitably shed in this fatal quarrel, and one's spirits sink at the distress of the unhappy mourners, who by these engagements are deprived of their dearest friends. But what can touch the hard insensibility of such, as living amidst all the comforts of ease and tranquillity, expose such numbers of brave men to hardships, pain, and death. You know I am no encomiast of the Americans, but I look upon the war with as much horror as any of the most violent on that side the question can do, and indeed as all must do who allow themselves to feel like human

creatures

creatures and think like Christians. I see a Lieutenant Morgan among the killed, and am much afraid it is Mrs. Dunbar's nephew. There is no official account given of General Burgoyne's miserable army; but by two ships arrived this week in the Downs from Quebec it is affirmed, that the remains of it have capitulated, on the condition of never again bearing arms against the Americans. Adieu, my dear friend. My affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock. God bless and preserve you both.

LETTER CXI.

Deal, *Jan.* 24, 1778.

MANY thanks to you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for your very kind and affectionate Letter. As I know you will wish to hear immediately from myself, I can no longer forbear assuring you of the constant and tender remembrance which in every situation you possess in my heart. Very deeply have I felt the sad revolution in my family, but, I

thank God, my mind is resigned; but there is still a kind of stupor on my spirits, which I trust will in time remove. You will easily guess what in a family so united I must have suffered for my poor afflicted friends. I have the comfort to hear, that my sister Pennington * and her family are much mended. I have not yet seen them, but was from the first with my brother †, who submitted with so perfect a resignation to the will of God as I cannot doubt will be rewarded with a proportionable degree of support and consolation. Never did I see a more unvaried and perfect affection and tenderness in any connection than in that which is dissolved by this cruel stroke, which has deprived him of his dearest happiness on earth; but in the treasures of divine goodness there are innumerable blessings always in store, when every human prospect is dark and forlorn.

There arises a strong present consolation to us all from reflecting on the blameless conduct and unblemished lives of those friends who are removed from us. During the sixteen years that dear sister Carter was in the family she never gave the shadow of an unkind or displeasing action or

* Who had lost her eldest son soon after the completion of his education at Oxford.

† Who had just sustained the afflicting loss of a most amiable and beloved wife.

expression

expression to any one of them, but was possessed of the esteem and affection of us all in the highest degree. My poor nephew's character both at hom and at college was irreproachable, and his parents, amidst their grief for this their eldest hope, must reflect with joy on the effects of that education of their children to which they have attended with such exemplary care. Both my sister and my nephew had the blessing of departing from the world by the easiest passage, without a struggle and without a groan, and seemed rather to fall asleep than to die. They have left us with joyful hopes of their happiness, and we suffer only for ourselves.

I did not design to have enlarged on this subject, but it is so near my heart that I have been insensibly led on. Do not imagine, my dear friend, that with all my feeling of what I have lost, I am insensible to the innumerable and undeserved blessings which I am still permitted to enjoy; for which I hope I feel the most lively gratitude. Amongst them I must include Miss Sharpe, whose kindness has been of inexpressible comfort to me. She had left Deal about a week before this sudden change; but as soon as she heard of it she came back, and stayed with me till she brought me to town. She has ever since watched over me with all the care and attention which a parent could expect from the

most affectionate child: she takes me an airing every day, which has been of great use both to my health and spirits.

Mrs. Montagu is upon the whole in very tolerable spirits, and looks well in health. Mrs. Dunbar is lovely as usual. Miss Cooper is not yet come to town, and I fear by the accounts I hear of her that she has not derived much benefit from Tunbridge. Mrs. Boone remains there all the winter. Many of my friends are absent this year. I am sure I need not say how particularly I regret you and dear Lady Dartrey. Very melancholy is her situation and that of her Lord. I suppose you know they are gone from Bristol to Southampton. There seems hardly the smallest hope of Mr. Dawson's recovery. And the poor Miss Clerkes I am sure have shared your pity. May God comfort all who mourn, and in his own good time restore cheerfulness to their hearts. Adieu! My love and most affectionate thanks to dear Mrs. Handcock for the kind concern she has felt for me. Would to God you were both in Bolton-row, though I should have little but melancholy subjects to talk of; but alas, that happiness is deferred for a year. Let me not be again disappointed. Amongst all the troubles that are abroad, may the Almighty keep you both free from evils of every kind. Once more adieu!

LETTER CXII.

Clarges-street, *March* 23, 1778.

I CANNOT express how much obliged to you I am, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for your affectionate Letter, and kind solicitude about me and my friends. I thank God my mind is very composed, and my spirits much better than they were, though they want a certain degree of cheerfulness, which I trust will return, and restore that vivacity of enjoyment which I am accustomed to feel, of those very many blessings for which I have, during the course of a long life, been indebted to the divine goodness. What you say, I have often felt to be true, that if the trap-door was not constantly opening beneath our feet we should grow too strongly attached to the world, of which the very scenery offers such inexhaustible pleasure to the imagination, that we should be very liable to forget our destination for higher improvements, if the divine wisdom and goodness had not provided a correction of our levity, and an assistance to our duty, in the affections of the heart, which must take refuge in a future and permanent state of being for a se-

cure

cure possession of those enjoyments in which it is so tenderly interested, and in which it can form so slight a dependence amidst the hourly dangers of a fleeting and varying existence.

Miss Sharpe always desires to be most kindly remembered to you and Mrs. Handcock. She has nearly finished her purchase at Mill-hill. We spent the morning there on Saturday in walking over her territory, and I think you would be delighted with her little farm. We wished very much for you there while we were planning improvements. The house which she is to inhabit wants so much repair that she thinks it most adviseable to build a new one; and without understanding any thing of the matter, we are amusing ourselves with making designs, which probably no dealer in brick and mortar will be able to execute. I believe, however, that you will comprehend our meaning; so when we can put it into any kind of form upon paper we will send you the scheme, and we flatter ourselves that its being a production of our original genius, and unlike any other mansion that ever was inhabited, it will raise us very high in your estimation; and I think you will allow that it equals your invention of a coffee-pot, to which, with all its essential advantages of a beautiful form, Mrs. Handcock most unreasonably objected, because the

lid

lid would not open to put in the coffee, nor the spout answer to pour it out*.

Miss Cooper says she is much better, and I think upon the whole her health is mended, but it is still in a miserable state. I see but little of her, as she is seldom visible, from her want of sleep, till I go out to take the air, which is almost every day. I hear she talks of very soon returning to Tunbridge, probably the sooner as she thinks Marsden has been of great service to her. Mrs. Montagu's health seems stronger this winter than it has been for many years past. She has lately been so entirely taken up with the fine folks and the fine things of this nether world, that wonderful to say, I have seen her but once in ten days. All your other friends here are well.

It is not possible for me to send you any political intelligence, for what is affirmed at one hour is contradicted the next. At the delivery of the French declaration of the American treaty every body looked in as great consternation as if nobody had had any reason to know it for some weeks

* This building scheme was never put in execution; and, unless the Editor's recollection fails him, the mansion, like Mrs. Vesey's coffee pot, would have been more for ornament than use. It would have had a beautiful gothic front and handsome rooms; but the vulgar necessaries of stairs, offices, and communications, had not been equally attended to.

before.

before. The alarm at present seems much quieted, and we seem to be pretty much in the same state as a French officer described his countrymen in the last war—"Nous sommes écraséz, nous sommes abiméz, et nous allons à l'opera."—A great outcry against the ministers, but they preserve their majority in the house and stick fast to their places.—The loss of the colonies will probably occasion great distress and convulsions for the present. In the next age perhaps the nation may be the happier for being rid of them. They may be useful and comfortable allies, though they are got to a maturity that would prevent their ever being again tractable subjects. There may be in states as well as in regard to individuals a proper season for emancipation; and perhaps all parent countries would act with the wisest policy, whenever that period arrives, to submit to it with a good grace, and to secure the affection and friendship of those whom they can no longer controul.

Lord Dartrey I think looks rather better than he did when he first came to town, and bears his affliction with the resignation of a Christian, though he feels it very deeply. Dear Lady Dartrey is not well, but the fatigue and anxiety she has undergone, and her present constant exertion to keep up Lord Dartrey's spirits, must have a great effect on a constitution delicate like her's. In time I hope

all

all will grow better. Such principles as she acts on will carry her through all trials, and she will come out the brighter for them. Lady C. Finch's family is all well. Lady J. Penn discovers amazing fortitude, and one sees no alteration either in her look or behaviour, though I fear her fortune must be very much interested in the present confusion. Miss Sharpe desires I will say she would have answered your Letter, but has been some days confined with a bad cold, which renders her unable to write. We had a very pleasant dinner party there on Wednesday, and I am going to another this evening, in which I wish you could join us, because I am sure you would be pleased. May we enjoy many of them together next winter.

I rejoice to hear that Mrs. Handcock is so much better. Tell her to take care of herself for my sake, not to mention your's, whose very life seems bound up in her's. I hope you are rejoicing over the first blossoms of spring (surely nothing in nature is more delightful.) I hope to rejoice over the falling leaves of autumn, which I trust will bring you to dear England. Indeed, with all the hope one ought to indulge in a world like this, I look forward to next winter, which you have encouraged me to hope will certainly bring back within my reach the dear friends with whom I have spent so many happy hours. God grant that they may be renewed:

renewed; and may every year bring such improvement to us all as may brighten our hopes of that final meeting which shall fear no future separation! Adieu, my dear friend. God preserve and bless you!

LETTER CXIII.

Clarges Street, *May* 21, 1778.

AMIDST all the disagreeable bustle and hurry of packing, and farewell visits, I hope I have reserved time enough, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to thank you for your *Note*, which I should have done before, if I had not vainly flattered myself it would have been succeeded by a *Letter*. That Letter is not arrived: but perhaps you keep it to enliven me by the sea side, towards which I hope to set out to-morrow. Miss Sharpe with her usual kindness will convey me, and I hope will stay long enough to try whether sea bathing will not be of use to her health, which has been very uncomfortable of late. But she means to return to Mill-hill and arrange her household; and when that is set-

tled

tled to her satisfaction, she purposes returning to Deal for the major part of the year.

I know not what to say to you about public affairs. We dream of wars and invasions: but it does not break our sleep. In private life people are sufficiently awake to run and fly from one fashionable folly to another till they drop into ruin. It is really shocking to hear almost every day of the explosion of some great fortune or other. Happy are those, and very thankful ought they to be, whom principles of duty, and social affections, confine within the safe boundary of reasonable and moderate pleasure, and prevent from running wild, and losing the path of allowable and real enjoyment. All that begins in *vanity* must sooner or later, end in *vexation of spirit*.

You have I am persuaded felt a variety of emotions on hearing of the death of Lord Chatham, and the honors decreed to his memory, both by those who did, and by those who did not wish for his taking the helm. Much might be said on the subject of this extraordinary phænomenon in the moral and political world. His worst enemies must, I think, allow that there were some particulars in his conduct of public affairs, which unhappily for this nation, do not exist in every minister. He was superior to all the dirty corruption of election jobbing; he attended with unremitting diligence to the

the business of his post: and he took care that those whom he employed should attend to their's likewise.—But I am by no means equal to the task of drawing a character, in some instances so uncommonly great, and in others so vulgarly little.

Miss Sharpe joins me in love to you and Mrs. Handcock: we please ourselves very much in the prospect of your assistance in planning the house at Mill-hill, and supplying such ideas as were never before rendered visible to mortal eyes in a composition of brick and mortar. Adieu! my dear friend, God grant us a happy meeting next winter, when I hope to enjoy your society better, than the depression of my spirits would have allowed me during the last. My heart sinks at the thought of my first return to a place where, some months ago, I was engaged in such a scene of sorrow. But all will grow better. I trust I shall feel with due thankfulness the innumerable blessings I am still permitted to enjoy. Pray write to me soon, I shall need it. Remember me kindly to Mr. Vesey. All your friends here are well. The accounts from Mrs. Montagu are as good as I could wish. Once more adieu!

LETTER CXIV.

Deal, *June* 3, 1778.

Our two letters I believe, my dear Mrs. Vesey, met each other on the road: and it is pleasant to think that perhaps that at the same instant they conveyed to us our affectionate remembrance of each other. I have been about ten days settled in my little quiet abode, and very thankful I am for such an habitation: I had the happiness you kindly wished me of finding all my friends, I thank God, very well. Amidst all the gratitude which I owe, and which I can never sufficiently pay to heaven, for the greater number that still survive, I feel much dejection at missing those who once used to welcome my return, and now welcome it no more! But they, I trust, are at peace: and this thought would give me unabated comfort, if the same arguments that convince the understanding, and awe the mind to resignation, could subdue the fond affections of the heart, which retains its weak regrets.

Sol perche troppo sente, e poco crede.

Yet

Yet perhaps the evil would be worse, if the objects of our tenderness could be replaced, and new engagements make us entirely forget those that are suspended by the stroke of death. The world would then hold us in everlasting chains, and we should lose one powerful motive for looking forward to the prospect of a better. A cloud at present hangs over every enjoyment by the melancholy recollection of the sad evils of last winter. I cannot avoid feeling the weight of those hours which I used to pass with the dear friend whom I have lost. I hope I am very far from repining, nor do I wish her back again. But the heart cannot easily recover such a heavy stroke, nor would it be good for us that it should. Every infliction of Providence in this world, is graciously designed to animate our endeavours for that where sorrow shall be no more. But this quick painful sense of what I have lost, will I trust soon wear off. In the mean time let me comfort myself in the thought that the survivors are the only mourners: and that the spotless and gentle spirits of the friends who are at present removed from their society, are possessed of a degree of happiness infinitely superior to all that the fondest affection of the family to whom they were so dear, could procure for them in a world like this. I could not mention this subject here to any one who would not be personally

ally affected by it: you are only so by the affection you bear me, and therefore will forgive my enlarging on it. I do not often indulge these feelings, because I think it wrong; and I endeavour to be cheerful: all will I trust come about in time.

My spirits, at present too much disposed to sinking, particularly felt, what at any time would have given me pain, your seeming to raise a doubt of your coming to England. But I will hope it was only a transient cloud passing over your own mind. Public affairs do indeed carry a threatening appearance, but you and I remember when the danger was as great, or perhaps greater, when a rebel army was in the midst of the kingdom, and an invasion alarmed the extremities *. That storm, God be thanked, blew happily over, and the same gracious Providence may avert the present impending calamities. Our national provocations against heaven are very great; but there are, I trust, in the walks of private life, so many who proceed on uniformly in a course of duty, that the proportion one may hope is much greater than that which would once have averted the stroke of divine vengeance from a devoted city.

* In the rebellion of 1745.

Your

Your magnificent ideas of British glory would, I think, have been somewhat lowered with regard to a late transaction, if the distance had not concealed from you all the wretched trifling and nonsense which were so visible on a nearer view—But I will be as prudent and cautious as you are. But to return to a subject very near my heart, the hope of meeting you in town next winter. Let me entreat you, my dear friend, not to counteract your own wishes, and those of your friends, as I have sometimes known you do, by raising any doubts, and difficulties of your own: but let things go quietly on, upon the supposition that you are certainly to come conformable to the promise, unless any unavoidable reason should render it impracticable: but do not let any such reason be anticipated by your own forebodings.

Every liberal mind in England must have felt a most humiliating sense of shame, at the treatment of our sister kingdom: and particularly after so noble and generous a proceeding in the Irish parliament. I congratulate you on the discovery and exertion of such spirit in your Senate: and you may condole with me on the pitiful exclusive temper of ours. Something however I hope has at length been carried to your advantage: and as I hear Mr. B— is pleased with what has been voted,

I hope

I hope it may be satisfactory on your side the water, at least as an earnest of something more considerable, when we are more at leisure to reflect on the mutual advantages of a friendly communication of the benefits of commerce. Mr. B— behaved through the whole business with a spirit and steadiness which does him great honour.

I know not how I have been drawn on into a kind of political Letter, for I had rather talk politics than write them. One word more and I have done. Though you cannot think with more detestation and horror than I do, of the folly of that taxation scheme, whether the right was well or ill founded, which brought on the fatal quarrel with the colonies, I have by no means such magnificent ideas as you seem to form of the Americans. I only beg leave to observe, that the highest instance of a noble spirit which has been transmitted to us across the Atlantic has been the behaviour of General Gates *: and General Gates was born and bred at Greenwich.

My best love to Mrs. Handcock, I have sent you a long prosaic kind of Letter, but in whatever style I write I always equally feel the same affection

* Perhaps alluding to his humanity to the sick and wounded of General Burgoyne's army, who were obliged to be left behind when he retreated to Saratoga; or to his conduct in the subsequent capitulation.

for you. Write to me soon, pray do, and cheer my heart and spirits by the hopes of our meeting next year.

LETTER CXV.

Deal, *Sept.* 28, 1778.

I CONGRATULATE you, my dear friend, on so easily getting rid of an uncomfortable engagement. There is something marvellously strange in the indifference and sang froid of one of the parties, which perhaps however is to be accounted for, from the stupefaction of distemper. Whatever be the cause it may save you from many an anxious hour. While one has any such share in the affection and confidence of those to whom one is related, as to be able in any degree to contribute to their happiness, or to assist their difficulties, there will be a thousand tender solicitudes, and a thousand anxious deliberations how to effect it. But when once this possibility seems to be lost, the heart should be at ease, and the attention discharged from

from its cares: and nothing further remains than the general good wishes of humanity, and the solid and practical good offices of duty, whenever there is any occasion which calls for their exertion. Pray do not indulge such a strange fancy as that I cannot read your writing; your Letters do and always must give me unfeigned delight, they amuse, entertain, and interest me.

As you so kindly and so generously acquiesce in the large demands made upon Mr. Vesey by his family, I cannot suppose him less attentive to what will give you pleasure in return. If his fortune suffers by their drafts, he will doubtless think it more reasonable that they should find a diminution in future, than that you should be liable to any disagreeable restrictions for the present.—After all, I am determined to believe that you will come, as long as I am not absolutely obliged to give up a hope so dear to my heart. I give you joy of the hopes of an heir to your noble neighbours. Perhaps it is more reasonable to wish, than to hope that it may be an addition to their happiness; for perhaps it never happens that those who fancy themselves wretched, from a mere negation of something not naturally and absolutely essential to the comfort of life, were ever rendered happy by the acquisition of it.

You cannot think how often Miss Sharpe and I anticipate the delightful parties, in Bolton-row and Stanhope-street. Her house there is charming: so airy, so well lighted, and fitted up with such an elegant simplicity, as I think will please a taste so just as your's. I spent about ten days with her in August at Mill-hill, but was perversely sick one third of the short time I had allotted to pass there. I believe neither you, nor perhaps any body else will agree with me, in thinking it rather a dull spot: but the prospect is so uniform, that to me it appeared tiresome. It is a green field, a hedge, and a row of trees, and then again a green field, a hedge, and a row of trees, and so on ad infinitum. Miss Sharpe feels this so sensibly, that whenever she is able to purchase any more land, she proposes to introduce a plough, which will diversify the scene. Her notable neighbours will exclaim at such a diminution of profits: and yet perhaps might think it not at all strange, if she spent ever so much upon the devices of Mr. Brown.

We pursue our airings, and often wish for you to share with us in any favourite spot. Whether it is from the prejudice of early impressions, or from its own merit, I will not affirm, but I soon grow tired of every country but this. Our corn fields are full of life and activity; and from the

first

first springing green, to the last stubble, afford an inexhaustible variety of colouring: and the sameness of form is prevented, by the mixture of wooded villages, and intersecting hills, and, from time to time, by that ever varying, and ever beautiful object the sea. We made an excursion last week from our own environs, to Lord Holland's place in the Isle of Thanet, where he built a house close by the sea, and scattered artificial ruins and antiquities over the surrounding green hills. His family have converted the place into a real ruin with regard to themselves, and it is now the property of his steward. Poor Lord Holland!

> For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind;
> Put rancour in the vessel of my peace
> Only for them!

I can easily comprehend all that an imagination and a heart like your's must have felt on revisiting the scenes where they received their first impressions. Yet you have the uncommon advantage of finding nothing to regret but a change of objects, while the powers which give them animation remain unimpaired. Your imagination paints with as vivid a colouring, and your heart beats with as quick a pulse, and with as warm a glow, in the autumn, as in the spring of life. I am so happy as in this respect

respect to resemble you, so far as my capacity extends: and I believe we both enjoy this unusual privilege in some degree from our having past the vigour of life free from the bustles, and perturbations, and competitions of the world; which I believe are much more destructive to the delicate and refined pleasures of the imagination, and the tenderness of the affections, than the ravages of age. Where there is no such bodily decay as to obstruct the organs of sensation, which God be thanked is not our case, I do not see why the innocent pleasures arising from a view of the scenery of a world so exquisitely beautiful, may not be enjoyed with as high a spirit of delight and gratitude at fourscore as at five and twenty.

My sister Pennington and family have been with me these three weeks, they leave me to-morrow; and desire to be most kindly remembered to you; and I believe my youngest brother's family, at least some of them, will soon succeed them. My brother Carter has since the beginning of July travelled over all the United Provinces, has been to Spa, Pyrmont, Hanover, the Hans Towns, and Copenhagen, and when we last heard was on his road to Stockholm. I hope he is now on his return to England, for I long much to see him again. If his understanding was not as rapid as his journey, one would think he could have made but few observations;

vations: but such is his sense and quickness, that he takes a greater scope of intelligence in a day, than most people do in a week *. This tour seems to have amused his curiosity: but his heart I fear is but little relieved. My love to Mrs. Handcock. I have writ till I cannot see. Heaven preserve you, my dear friend. I beg to be kindly remembered to Mr. Vesey.

LETTER CXVI.

Deal, *Oct.* 21, 1778.

WHAT is become of you, my dear Mrs. Vesey? I had a Letter from you dated September the 27th, in which you forbid me to send you an answer, and flattered me with the hope that long

* At this moment, March 1808, in his 85th year, the powers of his mind are as strong, his understanding as quick, his judgment as sound, his love of study and desire of knowledge as great, and his bodily health almost as good as when Mrs. Carter wrote this Letter.

before

before this I should have received an account of your being landed. It is very uncomfortable to me to consider you as absolutely out of the way of intelligence. I know not where to direct an enquiry after you from yourself, and nobody else gives me any information. In hopes that you may perhaps by the way of the moon be travelling towards Bolton Row, I forward this that it may find you at your arrival, requesting you to send me a line to assure me you are safe after all this blustering weather, for I have been very uneasy about you, the sea having been outrageous; here we have had quite a tempest of wind and rain. This afternoon is perfectly calm and delightfully pleasant, so it is to be hoped the bustle is quite over; but I long to hear you have not in any way suffered by it.

I wish I could transport you at this moment to partake the beautiful scene which I am enjoying from my window. Over one part of the sea is a dark cloud, illuminated by a double rainbow: and on the other, the setting sun is shining on the sails of the ships. You I am sure, who love nature in all her beautiful variety, would be charmed with such an entertainment, and feel it with due delight.

I hope to hear that you have quite recovered that tranquillity and cheerfulness of spirits, which I grieve to think were so much shook by visiting a

place

place which struck you with such melancholy recollections. I agree with you, that such reflections have an important use, and are sometimes necessary to withdraw the dependance even of the wise and good, from the weak supports of mortality, and to remind them that there is only one object in the universe, on whom the hopes of happiness can be securely placed. To most people indeed, I believe, the conviction of the impossibility of a secure possession of their enjoyments, is the only circumstance capable of weakening the attachment to a state, which, with all its real or imaginary inconveniencies, has, except in some few cases, such a superior proportion of pleasure to pain. You do not seem, by the manner in which you express yourself, as if you would agree with this opinion: and yet if you were fairly to consider the whole of your situation, and honestly to consult your own heart, it would convince you that you feel many more reasons for an attachment to this life, than merely the horror of the dreadful passage into the other. That all of us have sufficient reason to tremble at the thought of that awful period, on a comparison of our conduct with the rule of our duty, is too certain: yet that all but the wilfully guilty, and impenitent, on a comparison of their imperfection, with the declarations of divine mercy, have reason for humble confidence and hope, is, God be thanked! equally certain.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey, with every good and affectionate wish for your safe arrival. I hope soon to receive an account that you are within my reach.

LETTER CXVII.

Deal, *Nov.* 12, 1778.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for the delightful information of your being safely arrived in Bolton Row. How I love you for quitting, without regret, the pomp and magnificence of a chateau, and accommodating yourself so cordially to your dear little dressing-room, the unostentatious receptacle of liberal society and endearing friendship. Indeed I most perfectly agree with you in a total want of taste for whatever it is in the power of expence to give within doors, except cheerfulness and pleasure. Magnificence and show have no connexion with the feelings of the heart, or the real comforts of private life. They are proper appendages of state ceremony, and public office, to which they help to procure that external

external respect, which contributes to keep the refractory crowd in order. I am myself a great friend to the ceremonies used on public occasions, for I fear much of the respect that is shown, even to the most solemn, is owing, in a great degree, to the parade that accompanies it.

I have just been sipping my solitary coffee, and anticipating, with the utmost pleasure, the time when I hope to drink it seated in that very chair which you so kindly allot me, receiving it from dear Mrs. Handcock. I am glad to hear the sisters are gone to Sunning Hill. The quiet of that place will, for the present, I should suppose, with the uninterrupted society of Mrs. Pitt, be the best remedy for dear Mrs. Dunbar's spirits. I hope you will see Miss Sharpe before she sets out for Deal; I expect her next week; she is by no means well, and I am very uneasy about her.

I can indeed easily imagine what a striking awful effect you must have experienced from the solemn melancholy vehicle which you met on your way. We both indeed have reason to reflect how soon we must travel the same dark road *. May the

* Mrs. Vesey's gloom here seems to have infected her friend; for Mrs. Carter always considered and spoke of death, with no reference to its terrors, not as the cessation, but the change of existence; not as the loss of life, but a necessary entrance into it.

thought

thought quicken our diligence to secure a happy meeting in the bright regions beyond it! And remember there is only one guide whose instructions can enable us.

De sue lusinghe a liberar la vita,
De suoi spaventi a disarmar la morte.

The Doctor and Mrs. Pennington present their kind remembrance to you, and rejoice to hear you are safe in England. She has, poor soul, just got rid, by being here, of one of the uncomfortable effects of Tunstal air, a most outrageous ague in her face. It would be a good thing if Dr. Priestley was appointed purifier general of the air throughout this kingdom, for which I believe he has a much better talent, than for writing treatises of divinity.

A privateer yesterday brought into the Downs a French East Indiaman, said to be a very rich prize. This is the fourth that has been taken. One cannot help feeling for the distresses of private fortunes, even in a nation of our enemies. But the safe arrival of all our own trading fleets, is a subject of unmitigated joy and thankfulness. I suppose you will soon be made happy by seeing Mrs. Montagu in town. She writes a very comfortable account of herself, since she left Tunbridge.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear friend. Pray make as many of your formal visits, and dispatch as many of your right things as ever you can before I come to town. My kind love to Mrs. Handcock. God bless you both.

LETTER CXVIII.

Deal, *June* 20, 1779.

As well as an aching head will allow me, I will thank you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for your Letter, and indeed it was very kind of you to give me the great pleasure of hearing from you so soon. Indeed, after being so long accustomed to the happiness of conversing with you every day, I constantly wish for the only continuation of it that I can enjoy at such a distance. I am not naturally an inciter of rebellion, but I must beg you will not regard Mr. Vesey when he advises you to take leave of pen and ink. Your Letters are always delightful to me. They would be so as a testimony of the affection of your heart, if they were destitute of that

that power of entertainment, which they retain in the highest degree, whatever strange whims you may form to the contrary.

You gave me great satisfaction by your account of the manner in which your servants received the little token of my gratitude to them. Indeed their behaviour to me has always been not only civil, but kind; and every expression of the honest good will of people, who have not learnt the arts of polite dissimulation, is very pleasing to one's heart. For my own part, I am very much of the mind of a Lady, at whom I have often heard Mr. Dunbar laugh for saying, "she loved her fellow creatures." You ask me how I go on: I live very solitary and very silent; and see scarcely any thing more than the prospect from my own windows, for the weather has been so cold and uninviting, that I have very seldom been tempted out, even by Miss Sharpe, to take an airing, and much less either to walk or sit by the sea side. Next week, however, I design to exert myself, and get some exercise at least, whether it be attended with pleasure or not.

I was sorry to find you were still in an undetermined state. I know not well what to wish either for you or myself, who am tenderly interested in your destination. I rejoice, however, to find that the alarm about Ireland was a mere panic without foundation. I see by the papers that a Spanish war is

is unavoidable. If we were fairly rid of the fatal American business, my fears of the French and Spaniards would be much relieved. They have had no provocation for their treatment of us, and I should hope for the same providential interposition in our favour which we have so often experienced. But America seems to be the mill-stone that sinks us. Oh that we were free from all connexion with it.

Miss Sharpe leaves me to-morrow, but I hope she will soon return; I shall miss her affectionate attentions very much. We drank tea yesterday with sweet Lady Lothian, who is not by any means so well as all who know her would wish her. We returned home beneath a sky the most awfully sublime that can be imagined. The deep gloom of the clouds was rendered the more dismal by a mixture of sullen light. The rapid whirlwind, the rolling thunder, the rattling hail, and all the dreadful enginery of heaven, seemed collecting its forces, to burst in some tremendous explosion over our heads. Miss Sharpe, with all her passion for the sublime, which is very strong, was so overpowered by this terrifying scenery, that she could not bear to look at it. I could not resist such a spectacle; but I was heartily glad and thankful when the solemn apparatus ended in nothing worse than a hollow chilling wind and a heavy shower.

I hear

I hear an excellent good account of Mr. Vesey's looks, which I hope indicates that his health is improved; my best wishes to him. I suppose, by a Letter which I received yesterday from Mrs. Montagu, that you will see her soon. She is delightfully well. Pray give me the pleasure of hearing from you soon. Where is Miss Cooper? Adieu, my dear Mrs. Vesey, my affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock. Will you be so good as to procure me a frank, and convey the enclosed to the Post, for our dear Mrs. Henry.

LETTER CXIX.

Deal, *July* 25, 1779.

It grieves me, my dear friend, to find you are still in the same vexatious uncertainty. But come: for half an hour forget all your uneasinesses, and let us sit together by the soft splendor of this peaceful moon, and listen to the soothing murmurs of the ebbing waves, and turn our minds to the tranquil scene around us.—For why should our jarring

ring thoughts make a discord to the harmony of the universe?—Yet, alas, how soon may that radiant moon be obscured by clouds, and those calm waters ruffled by a tempest! But these temporary disturbances are necessary to the preservation of the natural world; and the little vexations, and perplexities of life, may be equally salutary to our moral system. They help to prevent our souls from stagnating into a dull acquiescence in a world which has no objects equal to the aim of our improveable nature, or to the dignity of our immortal hopes.

I am persuaded your imagination received an high entertainment from the account which Lady Harris gave you of the hermits of Montserrat. There is a very particular description of this astonishing situation in Mr. Thicknesse's travels. Does not one grieve for the weakness and absurdity of these poor people, who can suppose that a human creature can be more perfect and acceptable to the Supreme being, by perching in an eagle's nest, than by fulfilling its duties on the earth to which it belongs! Yet their piety, though mistaken, I trust is sincere, and as such its errors will be mercifully treated.

I am glad to find that our literary character is so high abroad. It is to be hoped that foreigners are not so well acquainted with the wretched folly

of our political transactions; oh that our orators of all parties were engaged! I rejoice Miss Burney's fame has reached the continent. It must indeed extend to every part of the world where she can be read. I do not wonder you were struck with Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns. They are all excellent, but there are some passages amazingly sublime. Amongts these is the manner in which she introduces our Saviour, after the description of the devastations of death, as the restorer of life and immortality.

I am glad your fears are abated. The public prospects are indeed very cloudy. But you and I have lived long enough in the world to remember when there was a rebellion in the heart of this kingdom, and menaces and preparations of invasion without. It pleased God to deliver us from that extreme danger, and let us trust in the same protection now. The French and Spaniards have behaved deceitfully and treacherously; and our war with them is self-defence. Oh that the same could be pleaded of that which has helped to bring the present calamities on us!

This Letter has been begun these six days, since when the roughness of the weather has so disordered my head that I could not finish it. In a tolerable sheltered situation, I believe this weather must be very delightful; but in this open exposed

region

region we are so agitated by all the winds of heaven, that whenever I walk out I am obliged to secure my hat and cap in a very powerful manner to avoid the awkward distress of having them blown to the Goodwin Sands. But I could forgive all this violence to my dress if the tempest would but spare my poor little garden, which is almost torn up by the roots; and, to the great mortification of my orderly spirits, the leaves and flowers are all scattered into rags and litter: this distresses me more than such a trifle ought, but you have no idea how I love my garden.

I grieve to read your account of poor Miss Cooper. I have not heard from her since I left London; but, poor soul! I can easily believe that writing is a heavy task to such health as her's. You bid me tell you exactly how I do. Indeed my head has been miserably bad ever since I came home. I feared the constant pain might bring on a fever, and have been let blood, but cannot boast of much amendment, except that I feel less heated. I am heartily glad Mr. Vesey continues so well. Surely he will not now run the hazard of fresh paint, or the fatigues of parliament in winter. If you have heard any thing of our poor dear Mrs. A. Pitt, do pray let me know when you write next.

I have just heard, and my informer says it is from most undoubted authority, that there are

10,000 men encamped near Dunkirk, but no vessels there except privateers. I hope dear Mrs. Handcock continues as well as when I left London, and not any the worse for the hot weather. My love to her. Adieu, my dearest Mrs. Vesey; and pray do remember that I have answered your Letter an hundred weeks sooner than you deserve after your long silence.

LETTER CXX.

Deal, *Aug.* 25, 1779.

You write to me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, at the end of six or seven weeks, and you expect me to write to you by the very next Post—and your expectation shall not be disappointed. I cannot bear to think of your being in such a desponding state, without endeavouring to propose some comfort. By this time I hope you are convinced that it is merely an idea, that you have been swallowing down the ashes of Plymouth. God grant that your predictions with regard to the rest of the kingdom

dom may be equally groundless. Do pray endeavour to arm yourself against this strange despondency. Pray, my dear friend, is the standard of Omnipotence fixed on board the *combined fleet*, that you seem to be so very certain of their power to ruin us? Has Providence given up the government of the universe, the command of the winds and waves, and all the circumstances of time and chance, to the French and Spaniards*? Till these points are proved, I do not see the infallibility of their schemes to overthrow the whole system of this kingdom, and reduce every building in it to the condition of Netley Abbey.

Has this nation no means of resistance left? Have we no fleet, no army, no wealth? It would be absurd and impious to place our reliance upon these alone, but we ought to be sensible and thankful that we have them, and to depend for their efficacy on Him who alone can give them success, and who can equally preserve us without their help. We are indeed a foolish and an idle people, and

* What can be more consolatory than these questions, as applicable to the present times? The terror which prevails now, we see has prevailed before. The dread of the combined fleet in the Channel was more rational as well as stronger than the fear of Buonaparte's army. God has preserved us from the one, and we may humbly trust that he will not give us up to the other.

in too many instances worse; yet though we have no claim to the justice of God for our preservation, I trust we are not in general so profligate and abandoned but that we may humbly depend on his mercy. My dear friend, I beseech you to exert your good sense and your piety to free you from the wretched despair into which you seem to me to be sinking. I preach this doctrine to you, which I preach to myself, and God send we may both profit by it*.

Do you know amongst your acquaintance any small sober family that wants a housekeeper, who can be perfectly well recommended? or any lady who wants a servant fit for herself or a child? The person in question is about twenty-five or six years of age, and is in all respects the more valuable, as she might live without going to service if she would comply with the condition of turning papist, in which case her relations, who are of that religion, would support her in ease and plenty. The trait is so admirable in a young person of her age, that I am well assured you will interest yourself for her.

* It gives the Editor great pleasure to avow, that these are the very topics on which he has always insisted (in his professional capacity) on the days appointed for public humiliation. It is not indeed surprizing that he should have imbibed many of her opinions, from his long and intimate intercourse with his respected relation.

Mrs,

Mrs. Montagu, who knows her very well, has desired I will mention her to all my friends: we are very anxious to get her comfortably settled in some good family, where her admirable principles will meet with due regard.

Miss Sharpe is at Tunbridge. I have sent her your Letter, and had the virtue to send it unread. Many thanks for your charming picture of Netley Abbey. Adieu! God bless you, and support your spirits; on him rely firmly, and all your melancholy visions will fly far away. A few short years, and all will end for us; but let us not lose the inestimable time thus allowed us, in anticipating evils that may never happen, but look up with confidence to Him who made us, and who will pity our infirmities, and in his own good time take us to that abode where "sorrow shall be no more."

LETTER CXXI.

Deal, *Sept.* 30, 1779.

INDEED, my dear Mrs. Vesey, the reason you give for not writing sooner might be very proper for a common acquaintance, but surely was unkind

unkind to a friend tenderly interested in whatever concerns you, and who wished to know from yourself every circumstance of your situation. It grieved me to hear of the alarm that you had suffered at Sandleford, and I feel the uncomfortable state in which you still continue. I guessed your difficulties before you mentioned them, and heartily wish I could as easily remove them. It is very unpleasant to be censured where one does not deserve it, but very much less so than where one does *, so that you must comfort yourself with the testimony of your own mind. Indeed I do not see it is possible for you to take any part consistently either with prudence or your own ease; for your spirits are such, that if any measure was pursued in consequence of your advice, and the event should prove unhappy, you would be miserable, and fancy it was owing to your interposition. It seems to me that your only part at present is to be passive, to leave the whole affair to Mr. Vesey and Dr. Warren, and not fatigue your mind by anticipating any unjust imputations which may be thrown on you if the point happens to be decided for your stay in England. I should certainly

* As usual, the Christian in direct opposition to the Heathen philosophy;

Leniter, ex merito quicquid patiare, ferendum est:
Quæ venit indignè pœna dolenda venit. Ovid. Epist.

strongly

strongly wish that this might be the determination; yet I value your happiness so much beyond my own pleasure in your society, that if it is after all pronounced to be safe for Mr. Vesey to go, I will not suffer myself to regret your absence, as it seems to me that in your present situation your mind would be more at ease in Ireland.

Do pray endeavour to compose your spirits, my dear friend, which I think you may, when you perfectly convince yourself that you have nothing to do but to follow the path that is chalked out for you, instead of the perplexity of chusing it for yourself.—With regard to Mr. Vesey's health, the task is more difficult; but I hope you will endeavour as far as possible to confine your thoughts to the present moment, and give up the future, over which I am sure you are sensible you have no power, to that gracious Providence which I trust will support you under every event.

Miss Sharpe returned to this place last week, and I thank God her health is much better. In a walk we took the other day she was almost drowned and blown away. It was a beautiful morning, and we sallied forth, and were a mile from home, when the sky loured, and quite a storm of wind and rain came on. It acts with particular force in this unsheltered country. She hoped to

secure

secure herself by an umbrella, but this was but of little use against the driving wind and rain, unless she could have converted it, like a Lapland witch, into a sieve. We were both very wet, but by the precaution of changing our clothes as soon as we got home, caught no cold; and to Miss Sharpe it is quite an adventure to talk of, never, I believe, having been wet by a shower of rain before. I am going with her next week to Mill-hill for about ten days, and we hope to get a visit from you all there. Such a little excursion will be good for Mr. Vesey, I should think, and not be too much fatigue.

I pitied your disappointment at finding the solemn ideas of a convent vanishing before the baubles of a citizen's box! Adieu! My affectionate love and best wishes to Mr. Vesey and Mrs. Handcock.

LETTER CXXII.

Deal, *Oct.* 22, 1779.

You would sooner have received our thanks, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to our kind friends in Bolton-Row, for our two delightful breakfasts, if my untoward head had not taken advantage of these storms to be extremely good for nothing almost every day since I saw you.

In the transport of our pleasure at getting a sight of you, Miss Sharpe and I forgot to be very angry, as in all reason we had a right to be, in a point in which we hold ourselves exceedingly aggrieved and injured. If you had been equally reserved to other people, the subject of complaint had been less; but that you should have gone and writ a Pindaric Ode, an Ode in Pindar's most sublime and best manner; that you should have given the said Ode to ——, that —— should have given it to ——, and that —— should have read it in an assembly-room, to the admiration of all who did understand it, and the astonishment and consternation of all who did not (you know this was the fate of Mr. Grey's Bard), and that you should never have mentioned

mentioned a syllable of it to us, who understand Pindar as well at least as one half of the fine ladies and gentlemen do who were admitted to hear it, and certainly love you much better, not only than half, but than all of such an assembly, is such an unparalleled breach of friendship, that it would not be credited was it to be put into a note at the bottom of the said Ode, when it descends to future ages. It will be prudent in you to pacify me by sending me a copy with all speed; if not, I will try my best endeavours to procure it somewhere else, and then in mere spite and revenge write a critique upon it in the true Bentleian stile. If you ever showed it to Mrs. Montagu she has faithfully kept your secret, for I had not my intelligence from her, but it came from a person who read it.

I hope Mr. Vesey has preserved the good looks he had the last time I saw him, and that the living free from the bustle of a parliament winter, in cheerful comfort and quiet society, will restore his health. I long to know the conclusion of the negociation about the house in Clarges-street, even more than for the copy of the Ode, as it interests something of more consequence than my curiosity. —Miss Sharpe joins with me in love to you and dear Mrs. Handcock. I am sure she has remonstrated against your Pindaric shyness. Dr. and Mrs.

Mrs. Pennington are with me, and are much your's.

We are all very quiet at present on the coast. Oh that the whole world was as quiet! and the dogs of war chained and muzzled for ever! Did not you tell me I was to meet with an Italian translation of Antony's speech, in Mr. Sherlock's Letters? I have gone through them, and have met with no such translation. I thank my stars; for if I had, I must have read it, because you gave me the book. Adieu, my dear friend. Pray write to me very soon.

LETTER CXXIII.

Deal, *Oct.* 29, 1779.

PEOPLE are, not usually very eager, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to publish any thing derogatory to their consequence, or painful to their heart; you may therefore rest satisfied that no one will hear any thing from *me*, of what you wish should be concealed; whether others to whom it was communicated

nicated may be equally silent, I know not; but if you ever find it mentioned, I beg you will not suppose that the intelligence comes from me. I certainly have no just cause of complaint for your not showing me any thing which you chose to conceal; but I cannot help feeling the reason you give for it very unkind. I had always supposed that the character in which you considered me, was that of one of the most affectionate of your friends, and never could have guessed that I was ever presented to your imagination under the figure of a word-catcher. Some people perhaps might feel flattered by the compliment of being dreaded, as a formidable critic; but I never yet felt any regard paid to my vanity an equivalent for the least suffering of my heart.—Do not imagine, my dear friend, that I am at all angry, I only feel very much hurt.

I am sorry to find the house in Clarges-street is still in suspence. Yet I think you are perfectly right not to urge the affair. Surely if it lets at ninety pound a year, and is to be sold for eight hundred, the purchase would be much the best bargain. But perhaps I may judge wrong. I find you are anxious about the sailing of the fleet; for my own part I think of it no more than if it were a nonentity. Every thing has proceeded in such a manner that I have scarcely any hopes or fears about

about human means, but depend entirely and absolutely on a superior assistance.

I hear we are to have the Essex Militia quartered at Dover and Deal. I fear, we shall find them but troublesome guests; but it is better to be troubled with our own people, than with the French. Though our own, to say truth, are bad enough in all reason. There have been sad disorders here lately with the smugglers; they have killed one poor custom house officer, and dangerously wounded another. The villains who did this mischief are fled to France, where they may be very useful, to give our enemies all the intelligence of our coast in their power. Surely if people did but consider what a set of wicked wretches they encourage by the dirty practice of dealing in smuggled goods, they would make more conscience of it than they do.

Miss Sharpe's love attends you and Mrs. Handcock with my own. I am glad to find Mr. Vesey holds out against the drum for Volunteers. My best wishes for the improvement which cheerful quiet seems to promise in his health. My head is quite rebellious and will only allow me to add how much I am, &c.

LETTER CXXIV.

Deal, *Nov.* 7, 1779.

You would certainly, my dear Mrs. Vesey, have received my thanks for your kind Letter some days ago, but I have been such a poor wretch, with a slow fever hanging about me, that writing was such a task as I am sure your affectionate heart would not have wished to impose on me. I cannot yet say much for myself, but I will endeavour to scratch a few lines, if it be only to assure you, what I believe is however quite unnecessary, that I retain not the least malice; and that your Letter has healed the hurt which my affection had suffered from your having expressed yourself in a manner which seemed to imply a want of confidence in my friendship.

I should pity you for being stifled in London this delightful weather, if I did not feel that every other opportunity of enjoying it may be rendered ineffectual by want of health. I long to range the fields and breathe the balmy air, and delight in the soft sunshine of these last fair autumnal days: but so far from walking, I have been abliged to let

Miss

Miss Sharpe take the air in her coach without me this morning. She has had a very bad cold, but it is I hope going off. Mrs. O'Keeffe has a nervous fever. Poor soul, her health has been so miserably harassed by her past misfortunes*, that it is much to be feared it will never be sufficiently recovered to allow her to enjoy her present comforts, though she has all the speculative sense of them imaginable.

I rejoice to find there is a fair prospect of your getting the house in Clarges Street, as probably Mr. Vesey will be pleased with the change. For my own part I must always find any house agreeable which you inhabit; yet I shall sometimes cast a look of regret and tender remembrance on the dear green and blue rooms in Bolton-row, where I have past so many happy hours of the truest social and affectionate friendship with dear Mrs. Handcock and you.

I hope you have by this time entirely recovered your epidemical cold. The weather at present I fear is too fine and pleasant to be wholesome. I have not yet been able to bear a fire in my own

* She was widow of a gentleman who was unfortunately killed by a clergyman, in self-defence, at a hotel in London; and at this time she was patronized by Miss Sharpe.

room, to which I retire de tems en tems to breathe its freshness, after being stifled in every other. Adieu! my dearest Mrs. Vesey. I depend on your promise when you can recover the Ode, which I will not without your consent read in an assembly room; but indeed I must shew it to Miss Sharpe, as it was from her I received all my intelligence about it. Have you heard any thing lately of Mrs. Henry? I fear alas she is no better, or surely knowing the delight it would be to me to hear it, she would have written.

LETTER CXXV.

Deal, *Nov.* 20, 1779.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for your charming Ode, which breathes all the spirit of that wild unfettered genius of poetry, that transports the imagination, and touches the heart with a power unattainable by scientific rules, and cold correctness. Every affection vibrates with sympathetic harmony to notes which are tuned to the genuine feelings of the soul. Indeed I am quite

quite enchanted with this beautiful elegy, and long for the hour of breakfast, to communicate the pleasure of it to Miss Sharpe *.

Alas! my dear Mrs. Vesey, what a world is this! Your heart, which would I am sure naturally delight in the applause of a friend, whom so many years' experience must have convinced you is no flatterer, is now cold and insensible to every thing but the danger of your niece. God grant you may receive a better account of her. You do not name which of your nieces it is, pray mention it in your next, and I beg you will write as soon as you hear any comfortable news; indeed any news at all, if good, that I may rejoice with you, if not what you wish, that I may sympathize in your sorrows.

Miss Sharpe has kept me over the tea table beyond all bounds of patience, and when I urged her to begin, snubbed me, and asked, how I supposed she could think of her breakfast while she was regaling on your Ode. She desires me to tell

* The "Ode to Humanity," which was supposed from many circumstances to have been the Poem in question, and was therefore added to the second volume of the first edition of these Letters, was afterwards found to have been written by Langhorne, and published among his works. In this edition it is omitted; and the error was acknowledged as soon as discovered, in a Letter printed in the Supplement to the Gentleman's Magazine for December 1808.

you with her love, that she hates you mortally, for your intention of concealing it from us. She thanks you however for your Letter, which she will answer as soon as she can. But indeed she is not well. In truth we are both but poor ineffective animals. My little girl * too has been taken ill with the rheumatism in her head, she has got well of that, and now has got a bad cold that is very heavy and uncomfortable. She is in my room, poor thing, trying to play with her brother, and they are calling me off every minute to attend to them, and I am too dutiful an aunt not to obey their summons. I had a Letter last Post from Mrs. Henry, in which she gives me the same account she gave you. As the disorder is not cancerous I hope it may be removed. I rejoice to find she is freed from the apprehensions of so terrible a calamity. You will be pleased that Miss Sharpe and I agreed at being particularly struck with the same passages in your very charming poem. Love and best wishes to Mrs. Handcock and Mr. Vesey. Adieu; my dear friend. God for ever bless you.

* Her youngest niece and namesake, daughter of the Rev Henry Carter, who then lived with her. She afterwards married the Rev. William Palmer, and is dead, leaving four children.

LETTER CXXVI.

Deal, *Dec.* 5, 1779.

WHY were you not with me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, when I longed for you to partake an entertainment, which I think you would have enjoyed with rapture. After all our late storms and deluges, this morning arose calm, and unclouded, and I could not help stepping out to take a full survey of it. The "Firmament glowed with living sapphires," and the soft splendour of a waning moon glimmered on the waves. I was at one moment soothed by the solemn song of the owl, and the gentle murmur of the peaceful tide: and at another I was enlivened by the cheerful crowing of the cock. All this I enjoyed in the most perfect solitude uninterrupted by any human appearance, or any human sound, but the glad voice of a distant sentinel, proclaiming that "All was well." My mind was calm, my spirits elevated, and my heart glowed with all that delightful warmth of gratitude, which is so naturally felt from an enjoyment so innocent, so unmixed. Very great reason indeed have I to be thankful at my age, to have

my

my imagination just as lively and capable of the most vivid impressions, as it was in the gayest season of youth.

But it is high time for me to thank you for your very kind Letter, and your intelligence of a world, very different from that which I have just been enjoying: as different as the wisdom and goodness of God, from the folly and wickedness of man. Yet it is a world through which we must make our way as well as we can, and endeavour from an observation of the miserable effects of the wrong conduct of others, to correct and improve our own. I could not help being shocked by the awful stroke that hurried poor Lord Lyttelton from such a dreadful state of impreparation, and I was much touched by your charitable and tender reflexions on it. Is there any truth in what the Papers report of what Lord Abingdon said about Lord Lyttelton? Adieu! my dear friend, let me hear from you very soon.

LETTER CXXVII.

Deal, *Dec.* 15, 1779.

You were very good, my dear Mrs. Vesey, in giving me a true account of the illness of our dear friend, and preventing any more alarming relation which I might receive of it. God be thanked, by a Letter which I received from herself this Post, she tells me she is finely recovered, on which I congratulate you and myself. It is much less alarming that this attack was of an epidemical kind, than if it had been her constitutional disorder; but all attacks are bad for her at the beginning of a winter, which no persuasion nor even ill health can make her spend in a quiet way; nor if we consider the weakness of human nature is it much to be wondered at; courted, caressed, and admired as she is in all circles, her brilliant wit, her enchanting conversation, makes her be sought by all; and it is too much to expect she should resist such temptation, therefore we who love her, can only wish her better health to bear the the fatigue *.

* It is sufficiently obvious that this character belongs to Mrs. Montagu.

We

We have received a very circumstantial and authentic account of Lord Lyttelton's dream * which you mention. Through all the affectation of disregarding it, it appeared plainly that it had made a strong impression on his mind, though not in such a way as seemed to be made for his benefit, or he would have made a different kind of preparation for the event. Whether the prediction, and its consequence, was or was not a mere coincidence, I do not pretend to decide. But to those who consider it as a warning, it must be a strong testimony of the truth of—" If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Miss Sharpe desires I will tell you with her love that she will never forgive you. I hope you will soon meet and fight out your quarrel, and then shake hands and be friends. I am very impatient to know what has been done for Ireland, and whether the proposals on this side of the water are likely to be accepted on the other. I am far from having any wish for the recovery of America; but a breach with Ireland in of much more important consequence as a national object, and very interesting to me, who am so greatly obliged, and so

* The dream which preceded the death of Thomas Lord Lyttelton, the circumstances of which are well known,

happy

happy in the friendship of so many amiable Irish.

I should have thanked you sooner for your very kind Letter, but indeed my head has been grievously bad. Yesterday it was rather better, but is beginning its usual tricks to day; but I would not any longer defer writing, as it may probably be tomorrow too bad to allow me to hold a pen. My love to dear Mrs. Handcock, I hope she is preparing kindly to furnish her cannister with such tea as nobody can drink but her tasteless friend. Adieu, my dear friend, God grant us all a happy meeting soon after Christmas. I hope Mr. Vesey finds himself so much the better for a quiet life on this side the water, that he does not regret the prescription of his physician: and if he is pleased I know you are happy, so I hope to meet you in good health and spirits. Heaven bless you.

LETTER CXXIX.

Stourhead, *May* 26, 1780.

PERHAPS, my dear Mrs. Vesey, you will be glad to hear how your friends proceed in their little excursion. You are so well acquainted with the country through which we have passed, that you can receive no information from me. As Miss Sharpe had a cold, which required some care, we staid two nights at Salisbury, which gave us time to see Stonehenge. Never did I pass nine miles of so dull a road as led to it. When we came to it, a cloudy sky lowered over this grey monument of the barbarous worship of our British ancestors, and rendered the view more chilling and gloomy than any thing you can conceive. It was impossible not to be strongly impressed with joy and gratitude in forming a comparison between this rude pile, the heavy labour of an uncultivated people, and the beauties of Salisbury Cathedral, decorated by all the arts of polished life. The difference of their destination afforded a more important and awful subject. The one, dedicated to the dark and inhuman demons of savage superstition, recalled the horrid ideas of wicker cages and flaming victims; while

while the Christian Temple presented to the mind the delightful image of a sanctuary appropriated to the devotion inspired by the pure light and gentle spirit of true religion *.

We are now at Stourhead, and have been driving all round the territory this morning, and are now wishing for fair weather to walk in the gardens in the afternoon. To-morrow we hope to reach Bath, where we propose to spend Sunday, and hope to reach my brother's in Berkshire on Tuesday. On the Tuesday following we propose to have the pleasure and happiness of dining with you. If any thing unexpected prevents us, you shall hear from me again, otherwise you may depend on us, as we do upon you, for surely you will not slip through our fingers, and fly to Ireland, to avoid being eat up by four hungry travellers. We all join in affectionate love to yourself and Mrs. Handcock, and kind remembrance to Mr. Vesey. Adieu, my dear friend.

* The editor had the pleasure and advantage of being one of the party in this tour.

LETTER CXXX.

Wittenham *, *June* 3, 1780.

INDEED, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I never heard that Princess Deskaw, since her overturning the throne of an Emperor, was ever guilty of a worse thing than the injury she lately did to a private gentlewoman, by shortening your Letter. One might fill up a half sentence from a common correspondent, one of your every day writers; but such fragments as your's can be finished only by yourself. A stone mason would make a wretched supply of the mutilation of an antique statue. I thank you for wishing me at the Temple of Jupiter Ammon; but I have no ambition to end my journeyings, in remaining a mummy in the plains of Lybia.

We are extremely obliged to you for your kind invitation, and I particularly thank you for your proposals of sending for Dr. and Mrs. Douglas, as

* The living on which Mr. Henry Carter resided, near Wallingford, in Berkshire.

it

it is the only chance I can have of seeing them. I rejoice in Lady Dartrey's good spirits, and in the cause of them. If four is a convenient hour for you, it will be perfectly so to us, and if you do not grow tired of us, we may continue the evening with you, unless you are engaged to plot revolutions and conspiracies with princesses.

Miss Cooper dined with us at Bath. I think she looks better, and I hope is better, than she was last year. We had likewise a glimpse of Lady Spencer. Mr. and Mrs. Thrale we saw, and Evelina, who is with them, and has a very pleasing and prepossessing appearance. We went from Bath to Cirencester, through such a road as none of us wish to travel again. Surely of all dull countries, Gloucestershire is the very dullest*. We were very glad to exchange it on Tuesday evening for this place, which is situated in the pleasantest part of Berkshire. I climbed a high shady hill this morning, from whence I had a delightful view of the Isis, watering the meadows, and stealing through the trees, in a most charming valley below. It joins the Tame at a very short distance from my

* It should be observed, however, that Mrs. Carter saw no part of this beautiful county, but the Bath road on the edge of the Wolds.

brother's

brother's house, which is most pleasantly situated *. Dinner summons me, so I can only add, our kindest love and compliments to all our friends in Clarges-street. Adieu, my dear friend, jusqu' au revoir.

LETTER CXXXI.

Deal, *June* 20, 1780.

Our dear Miss Sharpe informed you how very little capable I was of writing, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for some time after my return. I am but just returning to my usual state, which is ease and health, compared with what I have lately felt. It is very wholesome for one's mind, I believe, de tems en tems to be awakened to a due sense of gratitude for the blessing of even tolerable health, by intervals of extraordinary degrees of suffering.

We left you in the midst of summer and delightful warm weather, but found winter and a November sky at this place. The east wind grows more and more ill-natured as one draws near the sea shore: and

* The delightful views from the Wittenham Hills are well known, and have been celebrated in verse as well as in prose. This is also classic ground, for the junction of the Tame with the Isis points out this place as the scene of the loves of Henry and Emma in Prior's "Nutbrown Maid."

we

we have had it in high sullen perfection ever since I came home; but ill as I was, its frowns were but a trifling drawback to the pleasure I found at being again in my own quiet abode.

You have been very hard-hearted in never giving us any account either of yourself, or of the state of public affairs, in so very critical a situation. The tumults * we find, by the information of the newspapers, are happily quieted; but whether you are planning fairy cabinets in Clarges-Street, or climbing the cliffs of Penmanmaur, or crossing St. George's Channel, neither you nor any body else has given us the least intimation. My patience is at length exhausted, and I can no longer forbear making some enquiry after you. Do pray, my dear Mrs. Vesey, let me know where you are, and whither you are going, for I cannot bear to be in such utter ignorance about you.

I wish you had been here, for we have had a spectacle that would have charmed your imagination and pained your heart. Capt Pownal, Commander of the Apollo, was lately killed in an engagement with a French frigate. His body was yesterday morning brought on shore, with every circumstance of military honour. The procession

* The disgraceful riots in London at this time, but too well known.

of the boats on a calm sea, formed a very striking object. The foremost, with a drooping pendant half lowered, contained the coffin. It was followed by another, with the officers of the Apollo. In the third was the Admiral, with the flag, and three more followed with other attendants. The rowers were all in white with black caps, and the officers with black crapes round their arms. A double row of soldiers stood on the beach, and through them the corpse was to pass. There is no describing to you the moment of their landing. The solemn intervals of the minute guns, the languid dashing of the oars, the melancholy murmur of the surge on shore, the pausing beat of the drum, and the mournful strains of the dead march, formed one of the most pathetic concerts I ever heard.

What rendered this ceremony much the more affecting, was the very good character of Captain Pownal, who was extremely beloved. We saw some of his officers in tears, and it is said to have been the case of his whole ship's company. He has left an orphan daughter about sixteen. We have an assembly here, and yesterday was the proper day for it. The officers both of sea and land sent to the master of the ceremonies to let him know that none of them could think of going on that day; so it was put off.—Such an instance

of feeling and decency is quite exemplary, in an age when they so seldom interfere with any scheme of diversion. The coffin is lodged for the present at the Naval Office here, in a room hung round with ensigns for its reception, till orders are received from the family where it is to be interred.

> So sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
> With all their Country's wishes blest!
>
> COLLINS.

Do pray write to me soon, for I am very anxious for some account of you and your intentions. Adieu, Heaven bless and keep you.

LETTER CXXXII.

Deal, *June* 24, 1780.

THOUGH you tell me, my dear friend, that Mr. Vesey has taken a resolution of going to Ireland next week, there is something in your Letter that does not look as if you believed any

such resolution would take place. It may seem strange to tell you, but yet I wish it may. For to say truth, it is painful to me in an extreme degree to think from week to week you are *going*. When once you are fairly gone I shall feel very differently, and please myself with the hopes of your speedily coming back again. I do not indeed much like the distance when

"Alps rise between us, and whole oceans roll."

But you have so often crossed that ocean, and climbed those alps, to reach the friends who are so impatient to see you, that on reflexion they dwindle to rivulets and hillocks: and after all, when I am on the Kentish coast, it is, for all purposes of conversing with you, just the same, whether you are at Lucan or in Clarges-street. All I hope is, if you go, you will not fail to hasten to us by the time winter evenings become social, and that I shall find you in Clarges-street when I return there.

I certainly agree most perfectly with you on the excellency of the King's speech. His whole behaviour, during the late transactions, will, I should hope, convince all unprejudiced people of the innocence and uprightness of his intentions. I trust the fears which you mention of a repetition of the late

late dreadful and melancholy outrages, are without foundation. Perhaps the magistrates have by this time sufficiently recovered their senses to consider the duties of their office; and it is to be hoped, that if any new tumults should arise, they are prepared for that exertion of the civil power, which, as there is every reason to suppose, if it had been duly applied, might have been sufficient to quell the undisciplined violence of a wretched rabble, without the necessity of a military assistance.

If you really do go to Ireland, I hope you will let me hear from you on the road as often as you can, and do not feel too much fatigued to write without difficulty. One should be apt to pity a common traveller for going so often for such a long journey over the same ground. But an imagination like your's has the power of placing the same objects in so many different points of view, and by the force of fancy so diversifying every hill and dale, that they can never lose their novelty.

Miss Sharpe left Deal yesterday morning, and is, I hope, now enjoying this delightful twilight in some favourite spot at Mill-hill. I wish she may catch though it be but a glimpse of you, when she comes to town, which she talked of doing for a few hours early in the next week. My love to Mrs. Handcock, and kind compliments to Mr. Vesey. I wish most heartily he would be decided one way

or the other. I was so anxious about you that I determined to write this Post, though it is literally with my poor head on a pillow. Good night. God bless you and preserve you, whatever your destination may be.

LETTER CXXXIII.

Deal, *July* 25, 1780.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear friend, for the delightful hopes you give me for next winter. The fewer winters we have to pass beneath the skies, the more we wish for the company of every friend that helps to cheer their gloomy hours, and enliven and supply their want of sunshine. It is happy when amidst the gayest flowers, the bright days, and the sportive zephyrs of youth, one has made a provision of such pleasures as will enliven and warm the heart, and prevent it sinking under the clouded sky, the chilling blast, and faded landscape of declining age*. Such, my dear Mrs.

* So also thought the wisest of men.—See Eccles. xii. 1.

Vesey,

Vesey, let me hope has been our fate; we will therefore look forward with delight and pleasure to the winters which may yet be spared us; enjoying with thankfulness the blessings we still possess, nor once repine at the gayer scenes that are gone by.

I can easily imagine your feelings at the breaking up of a party, so soon to be dissipated to all quarters of the globe, and with so little probability of reuniting again upon its surface. This is a very unpleasant thought, even where only the imagination and the general feelings of humanity are concerned. Whenever it strikes across the heart—— the only comfort is, that separation is a word unknown in the vocabulary of that country, to which, in aid of our duty, our tenderest affections should excite our wishes; for there the blessed meet to part no more.

I am glad the Sunning-hill waters are thought good for and necessary to Mr. Vesey, for I think your imagination must wander with great delight through the solemn scenes of Windsor Forest, and lose itself in the days of chivalry, while you are contemplating the Gothic grandeur of the Castle. I never enter it without expecting to see troops of armed knights and bevies of fine ladies. Are you not always vexed by the confusion of ideas one feels on seeing King William looking so sedentary and modern? I have a great respect for King William,

and

and think he was a real hero; but he was not a Gothic hero, and he looks misplaced at the upper end of St. George's Hall *.

I lately had some conversation with two persons who knew Mr. Bruce at Algiers, and were in his house. They both declared they had seen him draw very finely †. Mr. Bruce is nothing to you or me, but principles of common justice and humanity will give us both great pleasure in being able to confute a slander. Neither the gentleman nor lady from whom I had my intelligence spoke of him with any degree of that partiality which might have helped to blind their judgment.

I am sorry, both for Miss Sharpe's sake and your's, that you did not meet when she was in town; however, I hope the loss will be repaired many times in the winter. I expect she will return

* Here, as well as in several other places, there is a passage scratched out with very different coloured and much blacker ink, which seems to ascertain the fact that Mrs. Carter had looked over these Letters, and thinking they might be published afterwards, had erased what she did not chuse should appear.

† In this assertion there seems to be a mistake, either on the part of Mrs. Carter or of the gentleman and lady alluded to. The Editor knows them well, and has very often heard them say, that they had seen very fine drawings on his table, both finished and unfinished, but that they had never seen him actually employed upon them; but subsequent accounts have much tended to establish Mr. Bruce's veracity.

to me in about a fortnight. My best wishes to Mr. Vesey for the success of the waters. My love to dear Mrs. Handcock, and tell her from me she is a very wretch, for not one kind word did she send me in your last Letter. God bless you, my dear friend.

LETTER CXXXIV.

Deal, *Aug.* 14, 1780.

How have you fared, my dear Mrs. Vesey, in the last week of outrageous tempests? I hope you have suffered no worse inconvenience than the interruption of your rambles and your concern for the harvest. We have now more prosperous days, and I hope no great mischief has been done, except to the hops, which are of much less consequence than other productions. Every stream can furnish people with drink, but it is not so easy to supply them with bread.

It has been very unpleasant to me that I have so long deferred thanking you for a very kind and entertaining

entertaining Letter, but indeed I have not been well, though it is difficult for me to tell what I have ailed. It is, besides my usual proportion of head-ach, a general weakness and languor, which renders any exertion either of body or mind extremely painful, and in good degree impracticable to me. And this you will easily believe when I tell you this Letter was begun nearly a week ago; but indeed I have been unable to hold a pen, and I know your affectionate heart will plead my excuse. I would impute it to the heat of the weather, which is as sultry now as it was boisterous a fortnight ago, and of which I hear people complain; but I do not feel the weather so disagreeably hot. Sitting at my delightful window, fanned by the fresh breezes, and looking on the cool expanse of the ocean, I feel no inconvenience either from the scorching sun or dusty earth. From the incapacity of moving up and down with the freedom and activity I could wish, I ought to be very cheerful in the power of enjoying my situation while I sit still; and in the disposition of my mind I hope I am so, though I cannot prevent the animal impression of my present torpid state.

I am glad Mr. Vesey finds reason to be pleased with the Sunning-hill waters. I hope the prospect of his improving health will give you spirits, and allow you to feel the perfect enjoyment of your situation,

situation. While you are reposing during the sultry hours beneath the romantic shades of Windsor, how could I wish to partake your reveries, while you are conjuring up the phantoms of Gothic times, and losing all modern transactions amidst the adventures of chivalry. Imagination is a capricious rover, fond of every object that carries it out of the track of daily and familiar occurrences. It loves to traverse the pathless desart and enchanted forest, to roam amidst the wilds of uncultivated nature, and to amuse itself with the extravagant effects of untutored passions. But while we listen to the entertaining relations of the sportive wanderer, let our reason, my dear friend, teach us to be thankful for the blessings of living under the security of civil government, amidst the illuminations of intellectual improvement, and the gentle endearments of regulated society and polished life.

Miss Sharpe desires her love to you and dear Mrs. Handcock. She looks well and is in very good spirits, but is sadly teized by a pain in her side and palpitations at her heart; she is ordered to ride, and has accordingly begun: I hope it will do her good. Miss Beauvoir * is at present staying with

* Daughter to Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Beauvoir, who became Miss Sharpe's first husband. She married William Hammond, Esq.

with her. She is come to Deal for the benefit of sea-bathing for a complaint in her head, which makes her suffer very much. It is to be hoped she will get the better of it, as it very much affects her looks.

Lady Mornington has been so good as to call on me two or three times. I certainly do honour her very much for having a greatness of mind superior to the littleness of pride. She has been very much engaged since she has been here with dear Lady Lothian, who has been very ill indeed. God be thanked, she is now better. Her present situation gives one hope that her health may mend after it is over, or the state in which she now is would be very alarming. May God preserve a life so inestimable to her family, and so exemplary to the world!

Why did you not name in what part of Sunninghill the spot which you so charmingly describe is situated, that I might try to recollect it. I think the change of the house where Mrs. Montagu lodged must be greatly to it's advantage. It could never look well but in a ruin. Pray write soon. God bless you, my dear friend.

Esq. of St. Alban's Court, in East Kent, who, in consequence of that connection, has succeeded to the chief part of Miss Sharpe's property.

LETTER CXXXV.

Deal, *Oct.* 7, 1780.

THOUGH Mr. Vesey's sufferings from the gout have been very grievous both to him and you, yet it seems to be so critical a symptom in his favour that I hope, my dear Mrs. Vesey, you will both find yourselves repaid by a comfortable amendment in his general health.

Indeed I perfectly enter into the disappointment of all your fairy visions in Clarges-street. Is there no inspiring the prosaic head, nor mollifying the obdurate heart, of Dr. Rycroft? If there was any danger of his being deprived of the light of the worky-day sun, merely to afford you a romantic view of the moon, one knows not how to blame him; but in any other case he seems to have acted a very unneighbourly part. Miss Sharpe is gone to Mill-hill for a month, so it is probable she may be so happy as to see you before her return. She is by no means well, and I wish her to make some excursions, but she says her spirits are not equal to it. She is but a poor creature at best, and all unfortunately owing to wrong treatment, or more properly

properly speaking, to too much care having been taken of her in her childhood, when the wind of heaven was not suffered to blow on her, for fear she should catch cold. Poor thing! she is now fully sensible of the harm it has done her, and tries all in her power to counteract it; but alas, I fear it will be in vain, and that she will ever remain of the same delicate constitution which her parents, not nature, gave her.

I have no very good account to give of myself, for indeed my wretched head has been very bad; and you will easily guess how my spirits must have been affected by the death of sweet Lady Lothian. Her virtues were universally acknowledged, but only those with whom she conversed without reserve could perfectly discover the sanctity of those principles from which they flowed. It was these which rendered her superior to all the temptations of youth, beauty, and exalted rank, refined her soul from the dross of folly, and preserved it pure amongst the infection of a gay deceitful world.

Alma beata, e bella,
Vattene in pace omai
Della tua virtù a goder il premio eterno!

If this rainy weather continues I imagine Mr. Vesey will soon think of moving to town. Wherever you

you are, I hope soon to have the pleasure of hearing from you. And pray be so good as to explain to me the passage in your Letter about the post, for it is at present as dark as an oracle—or as a Gazette!

Lady Mornington left Deal about a fortnight ago. She has left Lady Mary Wellesley behind to continue bathing, which seems to have done her much good: I hope she is even better than when Lady Mornington went. Lord Lothian, I hear, is gone out of town: I hope he feels his loss as he ought, for she was an angel. I long to know something certain about the poor dear children. My most kind remembrance to Mr. Vesey and Mrs. Handcock. I hope the former will nurse and make much of his gout, for though a very troublesome companion, I am assured it is often a very salutary one. Bon soir, ma chere amie.

LETTER CXXXVI.

Bath, *Nov.* 11, 1780.

You will I know, my dear Mrs. Vesey, be glad to hear that your friends are safely arrived at the end of their journey, which was indeed very pleasant, for we flew with as swift and steady a pace as if we had been conveyed in the chariot of the sun. The weather yesterday was delightful, and every landscape appeared in its highest beauty. I never saw the colouring of the woods wear a more picturesque appearance. We were all particularly charmed with Lord Aylesbury's park, which much more resembles an old romantic forest than any artificial plantation *. If it had belonged to any of us, we should certainly have spent a good part of the estate in building a Gothic castle in the midst of the wildest part. Perhaps such a castle there may be, for we saw no dwelling. If dear Miss

* Mrs. Carter appears to have mistaken Marlborough, or more properly, Savernake Forest, through a corner of which the Bath road runs, for Lord Aylesbury's park at Tottenham, which is adjoining to it. Unless the Editor mistakes, there is a distant view of the house through a riding of the forest.

Sharpe's

Sharpe's health had been more comfortable, our journey would have been quite an excursion of pleasure. She and the rest of our party join in love to you and Mrs. Handcock, and best wishes to Mr. Vesey.

Mrs. Montagu called on us this morning. She has had a little cold, but I think she looks much better than she did last winter. When you see Lady Dartrey and Mrs. Dunbar be so good as to tell them I will write soon; but my head will not allow me to write much at a time, though I could not help saying a word or two to you, who are a poor prisoner. Miss Sharpe, I thank God, is not the worse for her journey, and I hope will soon be the better for the waters. If you have a spare half hour, do write to me; it will be a great comfort to me to hear a better account of you and your proceedings. God bless you.

LETTER CXXXVII.

Bennet Street, Bath, *Nov.* 27, 1780.

BESIDES the pleasure which a letter from you, my dear friend, always gives me, your last was most particularly agreeable to me, as a proof that your heart was more at ease than it has been for some time past, and I rejoice beyond measure at it. Indeed from every account I have lately heard o Mr. Vesey, his health is wonderfully mended, and affords a prospect, with a commonly prudent degree of caution, of several years of comfortable life, which God send him, as it will add so essentially to your comfort. By the time we meet I hope he will have sufficiently recovered his strength and spirits to enjoy every real pleasure of society.

Miss Sharpe has had too little trial of the waters to decide whether they have done her any good, nor can one even form a judgment whether they agree with her, as a feverish cold has prevented her for the last ten days from drinking them. I can give you no account of the transactions of Bath, for we live as much out of the crowd, if there is a

crowd, as if we were in some retired country village. All we see of the Bath world is at the pump-room, where we have scarce seen a single person that any of us knows, or of whose name we ever heard.

A few mornings ago, however, I was most agreeably surprized by meeting Miss More *, whom I rejoiced to see, not only on those accounts on which one must always be glad to meet so every way a delightful person, but as a human creature, with whom I could hold some conversation, which had not happened to me before. But all human pleasures are transient, for to my sorrow she did not make any stay here; however, she and her sister past one afternoon with us, and we are to visit them at Bristol, if Miss Sharpe gets well enough to bear the excursion before Miss More leaves it for London.

Mrs. Montagu continues delightfully well, and I hope will lay in a stock of health sufficient to defray the expences of the winter, and to satisfy the wishes of all her friends. Alas, if her friends alone were concerned, her strength and spirits may be reasonably hoped to suffice them, for those who truly love her would never wish her to exert either

* Mrs. Hannah More, to whom the world is obliged for many years of unremitted attentions to its truest interests; for instruction conveyed in its most elegant and pleasing form, and for an example of singular gentleness, piety, and virtue.

beyond the proper bounds; but the demands of the world on her talents are unmerciful, and the constitution of a Hercules would be insufficient to answer them.

Miss Cooper has descended from her mountain, and got a little more within our reach. Her health is much as it has been for some time, and we must content ourselves with its not growing worse; I fear indeed there is very little prospect of its becoming better. Will you be so kind as to send the enclosed to Lady Dartrey. All this party join in love and best wishes to their friends in Clarges Street. Adieu, my dear friend.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

Bath, *Dec.* 23, 1780.

How kind it was in you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to allot any of your few minutes of leisure to give me the pleasure of hearing from you. Your present solitary confinement will I hope soon be rewarded by such a recovery of your patient as will

will enable him to share with you in all the pleasures and delights of society. I have long known you, my dear friend, in much more amusing situations than that which has engaged you for some time past, but in none wherein you have appeared so truly respectable and amiable as in so unwearied an application to so melancholy a duty. When you see Mr. Vesey again restored to ease and society, with what pleasure you will then reflect on all the hours you have spent in contributing to his recovery!

I wish I could contradict the report you have heard of us, but indeed I cannot yet flatter myself that my patient gains any ground. Her head is I hope better, but the pain in her side is much the same, and upon the whole I do not see much difference. I do not know how much longer we shall remain here, but I recommend giving the waters a fair trial.

It gives me very sincere pleasure to find that a certain friend of your's has forsaken the path of error and darkness, and returned to daylight and a strait road. She has, I am informed, behaved on a certain occasion in a manner worthy of the best principles, and avoided every little dirty artifice, which a cunning schemer might have judged conducive to the attainment of a favourite wish.

I rejoice to find that this fairness of conduct has been so happily rewarded.

I have but little news to tell you from Bath, as I see but very little of the company. One of the most interesting objects I have observed is a little man *, very plain and ill-formed. He first struck me by seeing him walk up and down the pump-room with a strength and activity, which, compared with his figure, appeared astonishing. I have since had many opportunities of observing him more nearly, and I think I never saw such an instance of the superiority of the mind to the impediments of the body. It is really very delightful to see a human creature struggle with so much spirit and success against natural disadvantages. He is a Clergyman. His dress is proper, and perfectly neat, and simply elegant. He has completely the manners of a gentleman, and makes, in spite of his figure, the most graceful bow I ever saw, and one may converse with him till he appears as handsome and as well-shaped as "Edwin of the Green." We were all so struck with him that we resolved to become acquainted with him. He is very com-

* The Rev. Dr. Gosset, a gentleman well known in the world, in whose conversation the plainness of his person soon ceases to be observed.

panionable,

panionable, has seen much of the world, knows every body, and at the same time appears to me to be studious and a scholar.

This Letter was begun some days ago, but this has been a sad uncomfortable week with us; but I live in hopes all things will grow better. At present Miss Sharpe is much worse for the anxiety she suffers for her excellent friend. I fear there is little chance of his recovery, but we have not totally given up all hope, and the suspence is very miserable. The love and best wishes of all our party attend you, Mr. Vesey, and dear Mrs. Handcock. Lord Dartrey called on us one morning, and I thought him looking remarkably well. Pray let me have a line whenever you can without much difficulty. Adieu, my dear friend. God bless you all.

LETTER CXXXIX.

April 20, 1781.

MY DEAR MRS. VESEY,

As perhaps I did not fully answer your objections when I saw you this morning, I will now be a little more particular.

At the first institution of our Society, we wished to have afforded an unlimited relief; but a very short experience convinced us that this was impracticable, and we were obliged to restrain it to five parishes. Yet that none of the poor people might be disappointed, who had been encouraged to hope, all whose cases had been examined by the enquirers prior to this regulation were (unless unworthy) relieved; and those to whom from sickness a continued relief was necessary, had their continued relief though out of the limits, long after the order was past. I particularly recollect a poor man in Westminster in a decline, to whom the Society gave a small weekly pension.

As to the second accusation of a partiality, particularly with regard to Lady Spencer, I happen to recollect two cases which are pretty remarkable.

On

On her going to Bath last spring, she strongly recommended to the Society a person whose case appeared very pitiable, and whom she had often relieved herself. The enquirers examined into his character, and from the account which they gave, he was judged an improper object and rejected. There was another of her petitioners, whom she had likewise herself greatly relieved, and in a Letter from Bath wished the Society to clothe him in order to enable him to get his living. On considering his character and behaviour, he too was rejected, and Lady Spencer in both cases was perfectly well satisfied with the determination.

All the petitions that ever came to me, who am so very inconsiderable a member of the Society, have been relieved: and I believe it will be found upon a fair examination, that the very lowest contributor, has never had the least reason to complain of a degree of partiality.

Those who disapprove our scheme, certainly act very properly in not contributing to its support. Yet on the other hand, the members of the Society who do contribute their money, their time, and their attention, without any motive whatever but a desire to relieve the distresses of others, even if they are mistaken in the mode, are certainly entitled to such a degree of candour as should prevent the circulating unauthenticated stories to their disadvantage.

advantage. Their books are open to the inspection of all the subscribers, and no one of them is excluded from being a witness to the methods of proceeding.

Adieu, my head has scarcely tolerated all this scribbling. But I was willing that when you hear us censured you might be provided with an answer.

LETTER CXL.

South Parade, *May* 11, 1781.

HERE am I, my dear Mrs. Vesey, where are you? I hope in the spot where I left you, and where I may be likely to find you at my return. We are pretty much in the state we were when we left London; Miss Sharpe bore her journey very well, indeed much better than I expected. God send the waters may do her good; she brought a cold from town, but it is not so bad, but she takes a glass of water a day.

I called

I called yesterday on Miss Cooper, and heartily wish I could give you the pleasure of knowing her health was in any degree better than when I left her here in the winter. But indeed she is still in the same uncomfortable state, and I do not perceive that the beautiful spot and clear air of Greenway farm, agrees any better with her, than the fogs and vapours of Bath. She still gets no sleep, and it is astonishing how she preserves her cheerfulness. She promised to dine with us to day; but of this I am very doubtful, for unless she has a good night, which alas very seldom happens, the most easy and quiet society is hurtful to her. A sad circumstance for one so qualified to give, and receive pleasure from conversation.

On Monday next I hope to set out for Berkshire, and to return to Bath on Saturday: on the Wednesday following to be in town; and on the Friday to set my face towards Deal. Indeed I shall be very glad to find myself set down with the prospect of a few weeks quiet establishment; for at present my time passes chiefly in packing and unpacking; though I travel with as little incumbrance as is possible for any animal not clothed with wool or feathers.

If you should be set out before my return to town, do pray leave a little Note for me in Stanhope-street as a token of your kind regard and remembrance.

brance. My most affectionate good wishes attend you whether staying or going.

LETTER CXLI.

Deal, *June* 1, 1781.

Except that paper which you mention as your will, my dear Mrs. Vesey, which I kept for some time, and which you afterwards desired me to burn; I have not the least idea of your having ever entrusted to my care any other paper, and I think it very highly improbable, that if you had, on being reminded of it, I should not have even the faintest recollection of any such thing; so it could not be to me to whom you committed this deposit. I am heartily sorry you cannot find a paper which you mention as of consequence. Do pray tell me if it comes to light, as I shall be rejoiced to hear that you are free from the vexation and perplexity of such a search.

My fellow travellers and I arrived, I thank God, very safely to the end of our journey on Saturday afternoon.

afternoon. Mrs. Douglas bore what to her must be a fatigue, better than could be expected. I had a bad head-ache one of the days on the road, and to day is the second since I came home. So this wretched head of mine is in every climate and every change of situation just the same perverse thing as ever.

I beg you will let me hear from you before you set out, and likewise while you are on the road, and do not fail to let me know when and where I am to write to you. If you are to go, I hope it will for your own ease be soon; as nothing is more wearying than loitering uncertainty. Besides, when you are fairly gone, I can set my hopes to the delightful contemplation of your return. In your present intermediate kind of state, my wishes are all floating and confused, and know not on what point to settle.

Dr. and Mrs. Pennington are with me; when my sister first came to Deal, if I had met her accidentally I do not think I should have known her, she was so miserably altered by an ague. I thank God she is getting much better, though she had a slight touch of it yesterday. The poor Doctor has often such a return of his, as keeps him in the most uncomfortable state. They have taken at length a house in a dry healthy situation, about seventeen miles from London, which perhaps

when

when you return to us you may think within reach of a visit.

Mrs. Montagu I suppose you know is at Bath, where I hope she will recruit after her winter campaign, and lay in a stock of health for the summer. My love to Mrs. Handcock, I rejoiced to see her looking so well, and so much better than she has done for several years: so that I hope you need be under no apprehensions about her either in the journey or the voyage. Indeed Mr. Vesey seems so charmingly recovered, that I think your fears for him must be considerably abated. My best wishes for his safe arrival at Lucan, and he must allow me to add for the accomplishment of his promise of a return to London in the winter. Adieu, my dear friend. God bless and prosper you in all your voyage and journey. I am sure I need not tell you how much I shall long to hear you are all safe landed. Once more adieu.

LETTER CXLII.

Deal, *June* 29, 1781.

You would sooner have received my thanks for your very kind Letter, my dear Mrs. Vesey, but I have been such a poor animal ever since I received it, that I had not exertion enough even to follow my own inclinations, or to do any one thing beyond the mere necessary routine of every day's decided business.

Though I had for some time been accustomed to the thoughts of your going to Ireland, the date of your Letter from Holyhead struck a blow on my heart. Yet what I could not help feeling, I am reasonable enough to approve, and indeed rejoice in the virtues of my friend, which during a painful suspence of so many months has enabled her to preserve such an exact propriety of conduct. This reflection will help to cheer you under all the regret you may feel on the separation from the friends you love, and by whom you are so sincerely and so deservedly beloved. For my own part now you have fairly left England, I begin to please myself with

with the hope of your returning to it again—Yet I sigh at the thought of your absence next winter.

But every circumstance of this varying world is meant for our instruction and improvement, and the very frequent interruption which the duties of our situation must necessarily occasion in the pleasures of our friendships, should help to enliven our endeavours for a safe arrival at that country, where insecurity and separation are no more, and where every pleasure will be heightened by its continuance.

I should have been happy to have shared with you in all the romantic scenes which you so charmingly describe. I was glad to find you had an opportunity of visiting your respectable and amiable friends the Jennings. It is not wonderful that the habits of society should have undone you for continued retirement: indeed there are but very few minds adapted to such a situation, nor does it seem a proper state, unless under circumstances where it may be a duty, and in that case I believe it will always to every reasonable person be very comfortable: and I am persuaded your friends suffer very little from the want of a more active life, nor feel that vacancy that would depress you and me.

In the gay independance of high health and youthful spirits, perhaps a lively imagination might

find sufficient amusement in the most retired solitude. In such circumstances the stormy ocean, and the dashing torrent, the hanging precipice and the howling wilderness, the gentle rivulet, the whispering grove, and the flowery vale, all that is sublime, and all that is beautiful in the scenery of the world, affords a constant and a sufficient entertainment. But the inactivity of ill health, and the langnor of declining years, require to be soothed in the bosom of social love.

Miss Sharpe is at present at South Lodge. She thinks herself in some degree the better for the Bath waters. She has appointed our setting out on our Northern expedition on the sixteenth of next month, but direct to me at Deal, and your Letter will be sent after me.

Pray write as soon as you are in the shades of Lucan, for I shall long to hear you are safe. Adieu, my dear friend. God bless and keep you.

LETTER CXLIII.

Langton *, *Aug.* 2, 1781.

THOUGH I wrote to you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, before I sat out on my travels, the flattering persuasion that you will wish to know how we have gone on, is a sufficient inducement for me not to wait till I hear from you before I write again.

We sat out from South Lodge on the 17th, and travelled a road with which I believe you are well acquainted, and in which you could find little amusement. Indeed for about an hundred and fifty miles nothing can be more dull than the country. We visited the tomb of Cecil, Earl of Salisbury at Hatfield: and the barn which was built for a mausoleum, for the coffin of Mr. Henry Trig a shopkeeper at Stevenage, which were the only memorable objects till we came to Stamford. You will imagine we did not omit visiting Burleigh, with which you are too well acquainted for me to attempt describing it.

* The seat of Mr. Smelt on the Swale, in Yorkshire. Part of this Letter is omitted, having been printed in the Memoirs.

Miss

Miss Sharpe, who joins with me in love to you and Mrs. Handcock, bore the first days of her journey very well; but her health requires great attention, and is so unequal to any thing like fatigue, that we have not been able to make any excursions out of the track of our direct road. Mr. Smelt proposes some little airings to places worth seeing at a small distance, but whether she will be able to undertake even them I cannot tell. Do pray write soon, and give me a full and true account of you all. Adieu, my dear friend. God bless and keep you.

LETTER CXLIV.

South Lodge, *Sept.* 11, 1781.

VERY often during our Northern sejour, did I impatiently long to hear from you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, but that pleasure did not reach me till Saturday last, that we arrived at this place, where I found your Letter. It grieves me to find

you have suffered so much from that miserable languor for which I too well know how to pity you: but I hope as it was a consequence of too much fatigue and anxiety, you will soon regain your usual activity and cheerfulness, and again enjoy the delightful shades of Lucan. I rejoice very much that Mr. Vesey bore his journey so well, and seems so much revived at being once more in Ireland: let not the pleasure of the present scene obliterate from his mind the promise he gave me of returning to England in the winter. The looking forward to that, softens the pang of absence, and helps to shorten long months of expectation.

Indeed, my dear friend, we were by no means such volatile adventurers as you seem to suppose. Miss Sharpe's health obliges her to much caution, and she never attempts any thing that may give her the least fatigue, so that during the three weeks we were at Langton we never stirred from Mr. Smelt's territories except to take one airing. There were several places in the neighbourhood which Mr. Smelt kindly wished to shew me, but a constant feverishness made me so languid and so ill that I was totally unable to move. In going from Langton to Howsham, however, we contrived to see Studley Park, where I believe you have been. It is surely very beautiful in its own singular style, but looks like the retreat of solitude and silence. I never

saw

saw any place which appeared to me so perfectly the abode of melancholy. She meets one in every walk, and

> " ——— round her throws
> A death like silence, and a dread repose,
> Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
> And breathes a browner horror o'er the woods."

The whole scenery is however admirably adapted to the solemn ruins of Fountain Abbey, which stands in the centre of it. Indeed every thing reminds one of the historical description of the original desert where this noble monastery succeeded to the dark yew trees, beneath whose gloomy shade, the poor monks at first formed their only shelter against the driving snows and dashing rains *; but what will not enthusiasm encounter: more I fear

* The opulence of this Monastery at the time of the dissolution, formed a remarkable contrast with its foundation, which was very unlike that of most conventual buildings. The circumstances attending it, to which Mrs. Carter alludes are well known. It should be remembered that the same authority which assures us from personal knowledge of the magnificence and splendour of the Abbey, records no other circumstance concerning the Abbot and his Monks, but their hospitality and liberal charity. Henry Jenkins lived in the neighbourhood at the dissolution, and survived, with faculties unimpaired, till the latter end of the reign of Charles II.

for the sake of fame, than of that religion they professed. In the evening we went to sleep at Rippon, and saw the Minster, which helped to retain the solemn impression which the twilight shades, and ruined abbey had made on our imaginations, as the choir was hung all round, with the funeral trophies of the late possessors of Studley.

From these solemn scenes we repaired the next day to cheerfulness and social life at Howsham. Mr. Cholmley's house was built in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and retains enough of its original style to give it a very different, and a more respectable appearance than of any modern building. The apartments are very noble (three rooms of forty-six feet long) but light and airy. A picturesque navigable river * flows by the windows, from which it is seen to wander through romantic woody banks, most beautifully. The scenes about the house are delightfully pleasant, and the more distant views various and highly ornamented.

The style of living is respectable, elegant, and easy. There was a good deal of company besides ourselves, and none interfered with each other, by any unpleasant restraint. In short the whole mode of living of Mr. and Mrs. Cholmley seems formed upon the best English character, and calculated to

* The Derwent.

promote

promote the pleasure of the prosperous, and to supply the wants of the indigent. I should have thought the fortnight we spent at Howsham extremely agreeable, if the wretched state of my health would have suffered me to enjoy it. We drove one morning to Castle Howard, which is only four miles distant; never did I see such a heap of inconvenient tasteless stupid magnificence. Such a heavy load of building without, and such a collection of littlenesses within *.

We returned by the way we came, I thank God very safely, and Miss Sharpe at least not the worse for her journey. We both found South Lodge superior in beauty to many of the places we had seen; and surrounded with those comforts only to be found *at home*. Our love to Mrs. Handcock. Let me hear from you very soon pray, for the Letters I found here were of old date; and I am very anxious to hear you are better—God bless you, my dear friend.

* Probably the ill state of Mrs. Carter's health prevented her from seeing Castle Howard in a favourable point of view. The general opinion of that place is very different from that which she has expressed.

LETTER CXLV.

Deal, *Oct.* 1, 1781.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for your kind and speedy answer to my Letter. I was very much diverted with the picture of your running to read it, with your cloke crawling off your shoulders, and Mr. Vesey and Mrs. Handcock pursuing you. My heart thanks you for this kind anxiety to hear of a friend who so tenderly loves you. Miss Sharpe is just set off for South Lodge where she means to stay six weeks, and then purposes going to Bath. She has very much against my inclination made me promise to go with her: but as the Miss Beauvoirs are to be of her party, she will not want company, and I should have preferred staying in my own quiet abode till after Christmas; but as she declares she shall be quite miserable and uncomfortable if I do not accompany her, in the precarious state her health is in, I have given up my own ease to satisfy her, for it is not in my nature to give her any pain; therefore to Bath I go. She left her love for Mrs. Handcock and you.

I agree with you, that what affords a sublime entertainment to the wanderer of the world, has a

very different effect on the poor imprisoned recluse. This however was not the case of the first monks of Fountain Abbey. They fled from a convent which they found too secular and licentious, to practise a more austere devotion amidst the shades of a solitary wilderness; where they chaunted their midnight hymn beneath the open canopy of heaven, and had no other place of repose than the cold earth, nor any other shelter against the elements than the spreading trees. The distinguishing character of Studley Park is, that after so many centuries it still preserves its original air of a solitary wilderness.

South Lodge has the same traces of its natural state, for one never for a minute, while there, loses the idea of being in a forest. These are the only two places I ever saw where art had not extinguished all the true spirit of originality. All the trees are the free-born children of the earth, and consequently grow and spread with a variety and liberty of direction which is inimitable; all the arts of plantation are poor to it. Such scenes as these are certainly admirably adapted to raise the imagination to sublime enthusiasm, and to soften the heart by poetic melancholy; but sublime enthusiasm and poetic melancholy, are too high an exertion of our intellectual powers to be long continued without pain and languor, and

are quite inconsistent with the general temper that qualifies us for social life, and therefore are better fitted for an occasional exercise of the faculties of the soul than for a constant habitation.

For this reason, though Miss Sarpe sometimes regrets the loss of that depth of shade which surrounds her habitation at South Lodge, I think she will find it a great relief to her spirits, and an improvement to her train of life, to turn her eyes upon the gay prospect of cultivated fields, the whistling of the honest ploughman, and the prattle of the cheerful reapers, instead of constantly indulging melancholy thoughts under her venerable oak trees; therefore I think Mill-hill a desirable place for her. Her plans of improvement take up much of her time, and give a spirit and energy to a mind naturally prone to languor and low spirits. God send her better health, and then all would go on well.

I long to know whither my imagination is to follow you this winter, o a crowded assembly in Dublin, or musing in your solitary walks at Lucan, as you so positively tell me I must not hope to see you in England. Wherever you are, may you be well and happy! Wherever you are, I know you will sometimes think on the friend who loves you, and who longs, oh how much! for your return.

My

My love to dear Mrs. Handcock. I had a Letter lately from from Mrs. Montagu, who appears in delightful health and spirits, and proposes soon to be in town to take possession of her palace*. Adieu, my dear friend. Best wishes to Mr. Vesey, though I am not much in charity with him for so cruelly disappointing me. Do pray write to me soon, and enliven my solitude. God bless you.

LETTER CXLVI.

Chapel-street, *Jan.* 9, 1782.

INDEED, my dear Mrs. Vesey, if you did not put snuff in my Letters † you could nothave talked of hearing from other people of my being at Bath, as I wrote to you myself from thence. We returned to London on Saturday last, and the next day I had the pleasure of receiving your Letter. You wish to know what has been the success of the Bath waters. I think Miss Sharpe continually

* Her new house in Portman-square.

† It would seem as if this had been the case, for this Letter from Bath was not found among the others.

gains

gains ground, though it can be only piano piano, after so long and confirmed an illness. She went frequently to the rooms and danced, and thought herself the better for the exercise.

As to myself, the weather was so constantly damp, and its effects on my health so uncomfortable, that I was almost constantly confined. When the rest of the party went to the rooms I had sometimes the pleasure of Miss Cooper's society, and sometimes past the evening in Mrs. Bowdler's family*. Do you know them? If not, I wish you did. They are a most charming family, and would I am sure delight you beyond imagination. Miss Cooper looks better, and is I hope, upon the whole, in better health than she was when I saw her in the spring, but is still, poor soul, in a very suffering state, which obliges her to live in almost a constant state of retirement and solitude, as she seldom goes even into the quietest society without finding herself much the worse for it, which is sadly mortifying to a person loving society so well as she does, and so fitted to adorn it. Solitude, enlivened by the gaiety of health and good spirits, is a very supportable thing; but sickness and languor require the soothing comfort of friendly con-

* The virtues and the genius of this family are well known in the world.

versation,

versation, and it is a sad aggravation of the evil when it is of a nature not to admit that relief, which is very often the case with our poor friend. It is surprizing how, with so much suffering, and so little to amuse it, she preserves so much cheerfulness whenever she is in company.

Mrs. Montagu is in delightful health. I dined with her on Sunday in her palace, which is really beautiful, and in which she appears to be very happy, and God grant she may long continue so. I met her last night at Mrs. Chapone's, who is (till she is settled in another abode) in the Dean of Winchester's house, in Berkeley-square, which would admit a larger assembly than a lodging. Amongst the rest of the company were Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld, whom I was very glad to meet: he is altered very much for the better in his appearance.

You know it is impossible for London to subsist a winter without some foreign rarity. We have two at present of much greater merit than most outlandish importations. The one is Mademoiselle Theodore, a stage dancer, who is said to have the chastity of Diana united with the agrémens of Terpsichore. Indeed her character is exemplary. She supports a mother and a blind uncle, which keeps her on the stage, which she is very desirous to quit if she can get a livelihood by private tuition.

Our

Our other foreign curiosity is a Madame de la Fitz, who has translated some of Gellert's works into French *, and published some compositions of her own. She is said to be of a serious, decent, modest character, and was sent for into England by the Queen. Now I think it lies upon your conscience to come to England, and give your encouragement to these really deserving people, as an expiation of your offences for picking up such wretches as T—— and R——†, and giving that countenance to superficial talents badly applied, which is due only to virtue. Do pray come and make amende honorable.

Alas, my dear friend, it is not a reflection on the writings or conversation of a licentious profligate infidel like the Abbé R—— that can compose the astonished mind amidst the awful terrors of a midnight storm, such as you so nobly describe: you well know that from sources such as these no solid comfort can be derived, why then will you idly spend your time in reading what ought never to have been written? But you do it, you say, merely for amusement: 'tis dangerous amusement to a

* This translation has since been rendered into English, together with Gellert's Life, by Miss Sharpe, after her marriage with Mr. Douglas, in 3 vols. 8vo.

† R—— appears to be Abbé Raynal, mentioned also below. The Editor does not know who is meant by T——.

mind

mind like your's, indeed to any mind. Come, come to England, and in the society of those who love you we will find entertainments better suited to your genius and your taste. We miss you sadly, though I have not yet seen many of my friends. Mrs. Dunbar is gone on a visit to Mrs. Iremonger; every body agrees in thinking that alliance bids fair for happiness.

When I was at Bath, by the introduction of Mrs. Henry, I made some acquaintauce with Miss Crosbie. Do you remember her? I think you could not forget her. So far as I was able to discover, she is one of the most interesting and amiable characters I ever knew. Adieu. God bless you, my dear friend. Love and kind remembrance to our friends at Lucan.

LETTER CXLVII.

Chapel Street, *Feb.* 12, 1782.

INDEED, my dear Mrs. Vesey, it is very vexatious that you should not have received that Letter from Bath, which I certainly did write, as every

every trifle is valuable to a friend, and particularly such a friend as you are. I remember, I think, that it was in answer to one from you, in which you mention poor Mrs. Boone as gliding in idea by your pillow.

You have great reason to be thankful for that tender foresight and attention, which was a means, under heaven, of saving Mr. Vesey's life. But it grieves me to discover the melancholy state of your own nerves and spirits. The alteration of the powers of your mind is a mere fancy, with which you most wickedly torment yourself. All your friends and correspondents receive the same delightful entertainment, and are equally charmed with your Letters, as they ever were; they breathe the same enchanting style which has ever marked what falls from your pen; then why should you alone fancy them altered? Your hearing may be impaired, but do not let that depress you; it is an evil that may be remedied. A lady who was of our party at Bath is deafer than Sir Joshua Reynolds, yet by the use of a trumpet, has a perfect enjoyment of conversation. Though she is only thirty years old, she has perfectly conquered every foolish scruple about the use of this instrument, and always carries it with her into public as well as private company, and with this assistance declares that she finds her deafness scarcely any evil.

You

You say you have shook hands with hope. Why so, my dear friend? We may I trust be permitted to meet again, and you may enjoy the society of the friends who love you, and who long much for your return amongst them, for many years to come: why not? We must not expect to be always young, but even age has its pleasures; and let us thank God that you and I are still capable of enjoying them, whatever you may say to the contrary. Increasing infirmities we must both expect, but let not this natural consequence of living long dishearten us. Let us take courage where alone it can be securely founded, in a reliance upon Him whose goodness has protected us through all our former years, and who, if we properly seek his aid, will support us amidst the weakness of declining age, and enlighten and fill with hope our steps through the dark passage of the grave.

Miss Sharpe goes next week to Canterbury for about a fortnight for change of air: she has had the epidemical cold, attended with a good deal of cough, and a little excursion will do her more good than medicine. Mrs. Montagu has likewise had this fashionable cold, but her's was very slight, and upon the whole I think her in very comfortable health and very good looks, and as full of company as ever. Bath has certainly been of great use to her, but I think after her winter toils she will

will be obliged to have recourse to it again. There have been several sudden deaths lately, supposed to be occasioned by the remarkable warmth of the winter. Mrs. Chapone's youngest brother fell from his chair dead, while he was writing, last Thursday. She is, as you may suppose, very much distressed about so sudden and so unexpected a blow.

My love to dear Mrs. Handcock; tell her to take great care of herself, not only for your sake, but for that of all her friends in England. I love Lady Wake, but would rather see her any where than in your house. You kindly enquire after my situation. I like my new lodging extremely well: it is clean and quiet. I have no vis à vis but a chapel, and I have a side view into Lady Fane's garden. Lord and Lady Dartrey and the children are all well: she is as delightfully kind and good as ever. My best wishes to Mr. Vesey. Adieu, my dear friend. Do pray write to me very soon.

LETTER CXLVIII.

Chapel-Street, *March* 22, 1782.

You are very kind, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to have given yourself so much trouble in making enquiries; I can but love and thank you for it, which I do with all my heart. I have within a few days received your two kind Letters, but if I understand you rightly, there was one which I ought to have had before, and which I have never received at all.

Dr. Douglas has received the cover and enclosure to Lord Bateman, and is much obliged to you, and intends soon to do himself the honor of telling you so. His health is not so good as I could wish, but I hope, please God, he will soon get better.

Without any oblique methods of discovery, I can venture to answer for Sir William Wake, that he will not find any trouble in your enclosing your Letters to him. I dined there yesterday. I love Lady Wake very sincerely, but I wish, as I before said, she had taken any other house. We both took notice in the evening that a dozen people gave the drawing-room a more crowded appearance than forty when it was filled by you. Such are your

magic powers of arrangement! One would think you stript the souls of your company of their body, and left only a phantom to cover their nakedness; yet I never perceived that a human soul is more clearly seen through at your assemblies than at any others.

You ask me what is doing in London. The papers will tell you that the ministry is tumbled down, but what is to be built up in its room the wisest politicians seem at a loss to guess.—I truly grieve for the distress which individuals must suffer by the loss of America, but I cannot, like you, lament over it in a public point of view. Even long before there was the least shadow of a reason to foresee a separation, it was always my opinion that we should be a wiser, more virtuous, and consequently a happier people, without it; and I always wished our empire restrained to Great Britain and Ireland. A large extent of territory, and placed beyond the grasp of the seat of empire, I believe ever has been, and ever will be, the ruin of the mother country.

Miss More is in town; she has lately publihsed some Sacred Dramas, chiefly designed for young people, which are universally and justly admired. It does my heart good to hear the manner in which they are mentioned in all companies, and one goes no where but they are mentioned. At the end of

the

the volume there is an excellent Poem on Sensibility.

Poor Lord Dartrey is greatly distrest by the sad accident that has befallen his brother, and Lady Dartrey you well know shares all his griefs; and surely if any thing can lighten them it must be the affectionate attentions of so sweet a friend. Mrs. Montagu is quite well, and enjoying herself very much. Miss Sharpe is going to Bath: I hope the waters will be as successful as they were last spring, and return her to me in better health than she goes. The rest of our friends are much as usual. So much for them; for myself, I have little to say that would give you pleasure. My head has been very bad the whole winter.

There was to be a most magnificent ball last night at Devonshire House, for the Prince of Wales and the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland. Two hundred was the number originally intended, but the astonishing meanness and unfeeling assurance of some ladies, who extorted tickets, which were not designed for them, by messages to the Duchess of Devonshire, and Lady Spencer, have encreased the guests much beyond the first intention.

My love to dear Mrs. Handcock. Do pray mention in your next what prospect you have towards England. It is long to look forward, but one loves

to have something pleasant in view. Did I ever tell you I had received the books Mr. Vesey was so good as to send me? I beg you will, with my kindest wishes, thank him for them. Adieu, my dear friend. I always add, pray write soon, but alas you never heed my petition.

LETTER CXLIX.

Chapel-Street, *May* 17, 1782.

THOUGH I wrote to you about a week ago, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I cannot defer till I get into the country to return you my best thanks for your very kind application in favour of my friend; for which I feel most sincerely obliged to your affection. I have observed your injunctions of absolute silence and secresy on this head, even to the person for whom you so kindly interested yourself; though I could have wished him to have had the comfort of knowing your kind interposition for his advantage.

I am at present in all that disagreeable hurry, and unsettled state of body and mind, that always precedes

precedes an approaching separation from the friends to whose society one has been accustomed through so many months. This winter has, on some accounts, been a very painful one to me: but, as I thank God, I trust whatever I have suffered has not been from any wrong intention or behaviour of my own, I hope soon to regain the tranquillity and cheerfulness of mind, which becomes a proper sense of the very many blessings which I am so mercifully permitted to enjoy, though my heart has in one instance been so deeply, and so grievously wounded *.

I propose to set out from hence next Tuesday, and hope to be at Deal by the end of the week. Lady Charlotte Finch went to Deal Castle on Monday last. I am sure you will rejoice, on my account, that she is likely to make some stay there. Mrs. Feilding is to join our party before the middle of next month. 'Tis a great delight to me to think I shall have such near, as well as such delightful neighbours.

Are not you very inhuman to tell every body but me your expectation of coming to England? Do

* This paragraph relates to some unkindness which Mrs. Carter had experienced from a friend to whom she had been warmly attached. The estrangement however was only temporary, for anger never dwelt long in her mind, nor could hatred and malice find any place there.

you think there is any one of your friends to whom this intelligence would give more pleasure? No, you well know there is not; to what then shall I attribute your silence on a subject so near my heart? If Mrs. Handcock ever took a pen in her hand, I am sure, very sure, she would have had great delight in giving me the first information; my affectionate love to her, upon the same. However, sans rancune, adieu, with best wishes to Mr. Vesey.

LETTER CL.

Deal, *July* 8, 1782.

INDEED, my dear friend, very great reason have I to be thankful for the very many comforts of that quiet and pleasant abode to which you so kindly congratulate my return. I trust I am not insensible of the great and unmerited blessings of my situation, which I endeavour to enjoy as I ought. But I hope to be forgiven that weakness of heart, which I fear will always make me feel, at times, exquisite pain from the multiplied strokes

strokes which have been inflicted on it, and I think I may say most undeservedly. Do not imagine, however, that I make any of my friends uneasy by any outward show or expression of what I suffer. Indeed I scarcely ever name the subject, nor do I at all know how the affair goes on.

By all accounts, as our friend chose to change her situation, she has made a respectable choice. One would think it was scarcely possible to find a condition more eligible than that she has quitted. But that odd kind of thing, which passes for happiness in this world, is made up of circumstances so peculiar to every individual mind, that provided, as in this case, no injury is done to any one, no objection out to be made. I have had two very kind Letters, one before and one after her marrige, by which I have the pleasure to find this change of situation will not deprive us of her society, as she will be in London in the winter as usual.

How I love you, for so kindly and so affectionately mentioning Mr. Vesey's design of coming to England. I anticipate with great pleasure the delightful hours, which, if it please God we live and prosper, I expect to spend with you. This expectation is quite a cordial to my spirits, which are upon the whole very much mended since I came home, so do not be uneasy about me, pray.

I delivered

I delivered your message to dear Lady Charlotte Finch and Mrs. Feilding, who received it with great kindness, and commissioned me with affectionate remembrance to you in return. I hope there is a great probability of their spending the whole summer at the castle. Mrs. Feilding's three sweet girls are here, and true to the principles of the family, she is giving them a most admirable education. I never I think saw Lady Charlotte look so well, and in such perfect health and spirits. The uninterrupted enjoyment of her domestic comforts, which the duties of her situation so seldom can admit of, must form a most delightful holiday to a heart like her's, filled with every tender affection to her amiable family, and well they deserve it, for I know none more distinguished for every virtue.

I hope you have escaped the influenza as I have, though it has been very much in this place, but not so severe as in many others. You complained when you was last in England of a trifling degree of deafness. Did I ever mention to you a surgeon at Bristol very famous for the cure of that infirmity. A person at Bath assured me he had been cured by him of a total deafness, of above fourteen years' standing. Unfortunately I have forgot his name.

Our political system is sadly disjointed by the death of Lord Rockingham, who was the cement that kept it together. How far this may affect the public

public good, I am not so proper a judge, as of the private distress of his family, with whom he lived in the most perfect harmony. I am very particularly interested for his charming sister, Lady Charlotte Wentworth, whose gentle and affectionate heart I am persuaded will deeply feel the blow.

My love to dear Mrs. Handcock. Do pray write to me whenever you can. My kind wishes to Mr. Vesey. God bless and prosper you.

LETTER CLI.

Deal, *Aug.* 19, 1782.

YES, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to be sure I did think the time as long as you could wish before I received your Letter: but I hope to be amply revenged on your negligence at a distance, whenever I am so happy as to get you near. While the sea rolls between us, you have certainly the power to avoid writing, and if ever my idea, slim metaphysical thing, happens to reproach you with your silence, you can brush it away as easily as you would

would a fly. But when once I am placed vis à vis to you in Clarges-street, in full effective proportion of body and mind, it will not be so easy for you to forbear talking.

I hope you have had better weather in Ireland than we on the Kentish coast, otherwise I think you must have lost nearly all your airings and walks, for alas so have we. Lady Mary Coke, Mrs. Feilding, and I, had proposed many a ramble together; but during a month that Lady Mary was at Deal, we could never but twice effect our purpose. I was glad, however, that one of these excursions was to a place where once stood, within my memory, a respectable old mansion, the seat of an ancient and considerable family. Nothing now remains but a few sad vestiges to mark the spot where it stood. A sweet gurgling spring still preserves its musical sound, but the rivulet once formed by it, now forces its way sullenly through the entangled weeds: and the moss-grown trees by which it is bordered, look like the abode of ill omened birds. Do you not always wonder at people who have so little taste, or so little feeling, as to pull down an old family seat, for no other purpose but to sell the materials? They who enjoy the estates of their ancestors, should at least show that respect to the place of their abode, as to let it sink with

with dignity into a venerable ruin *. The heirs of this estate seem to have been singularly careless of every thing prior to their individual selves. In a fine gallery belonging to the house, there was some beautiful painted glass, containing the arms of the family, probably for many generations. No care was taken to preserve these illuminated records of its antiquity, and they shared the fate of the bricks and stones of the building. In the village church, there is a noble monument in marble, of excellent sculpture for the time. Two figures, as big as the life, are lying on the tomb: one a knight in armour and spurs, the other a lady. On the sides hang his helmet and gauntlets. The inscription is now obliterated, "unfaithful to its charge of flattering fame," and the whole so scandalously neglected by the family, of which there are many surviving branches in opulence, that it is in danger of soon

* The mansion here referred to is Northbourn Court, near Deal; of which see more in the Memoirs, p. 466, quarto edition. Even its ruins have almost disappeared. The male line of the family ended in four daughters, whose descendants became entitled to it jointly, and were so numerous that it was necessary to sell and divide the property. The present more modern house of Northbourn Court belongs to Henry Pett Hannam, Esq. who is making considerable improvements in the grounds, and endeavouring to restore them to their former beauty.

tumbling

tumbling to pieces, to their shame be it said *. Most pathetic were the lamentations which Lady Mary Coke and I uttered over this sinking memorial of poor Sir Edwin. Supercilious philosophy might perhaps look with contempt on the regret which imagination feels at the demolition of an old family house, or the ruins of a marble tomb. But I think it may be justified by those social principles that interest a sensible heart, in the concerns of those whom such melancholy remains recall to the mind, as having once experienced the like pleasures and pains, hopes and fears, and various vicissitudes of life with ourselves. Besides this sentimental impression, there is an historical reason for setting a value on antient buildings and monumental sculpture; which not only serve to perpetuate the memory of individuals, but are a record of the times, and a specimen of the manners of the age in which they were raised.

* The family of Sandys, descended from the Archbishop of York, lived here only for four generations. Sir Edwin, who erected the monument of which Mrs. Carter speaks, was his second son, and the first of the family here. The tablet was left blank by him, to be filled up by his posterity, who, either from contempt or neglect, never fulfilled his intention; for there never was any inscription upon it. The monument itself is in a state of rapid decay.

I was

I was deprived much sooner than I had hoped of dear Lady Charlotte Finch; as the little prince was thought by his physicians not in a state of health for sea bathing. If his fever can be removed, they propose his returning. Lady Juliana Penn and Mrs. Feilding are still in the neighbourhood; but I fear will soon leave it. It was a grievous disappointment to poor Lady Juliana, that Lady Charlotte was hurried away from Deal Castle, a very few days after she came to Walmer.

My kind love to Mrs. Handcock, tell her I condole with her, though I am not the least surprized she should feel cramps and rheumatisms in such weather as this, sure never was there so damp a season. Do pray write soon. Best wishes to Mr. Vesey. God for ever bless you, my dear friend.

LETTER CLII.

Deal, *Sept.* 21, 1782.

MAY the next Letter which I write to you, my dear friend, be directed to Clarges-street. En attendant, as you wish to hear from me before you set out, I will once more convey my kindest and most affectionate thoughts to you across St. George's Channel. You bid me say something about my health; I have little to say that would give you pleasure, but instead of complaining that it is no better, let me be thankful that it is no worse: if we were always to consider the evils of life in this point of view, many would seem light that now weigh heavily on our hearts: but my humble endeavours are not wanting to be grateful for God's blessings, and to consider what he withholds from me as withheld in mercy.

If there is any deficiency in the powers of your head, I am sure that there is not the least symptom of it discoverable in your Letters, so do not be ungrateful to Heaven by such groundless complaints, but be thankful to the goodness which continues to you such uncommon powers of contributing

ing to the innocent pleasure and ornament of society. If you and I live much longer, we must probably experience a diminution of the activity and spirit of our imagination, as well as of our bodily strength. Let us prepare for growing old with a good grace, and properly express our gratitude for those blessings which we have so long been permitted to enjoy, by a cheerful acquiescence in that order, which Providence has established in the several stages of human life. Let us endeavour to regulate and sanctify the dispositions of our souls, and render them as worthy as we are able of the approbation of that Being, before whom they are so soon to appear, and upon whom alone they are to depend for happiness. If this be the state of our minds, under all the disadvantages of old age, however our powers of affording any lively amusement may be weakened, we shall never become contemptible to society, nor burthensome and disagreeable to our friends.

What a striking and tremendous picture have you drawn of the falling old castle, and it's wretched owners! An absolute ruin, though a melancholy object, soothes and sobers the imagination by ideas of repose. But a noble old seat *en décadence*, impresses the mind with images of living misery, and misery of the most painful kind, when alas it is, as in the

case you so emphatically describe, connected with the horrors of guilt!

The unfortunate state of the weather prevented Mrs. Montagu from undertaking her northern journey; and she is still enjoying the delights of Sandleford. I had a Letter from her a few days ago, in which she gave me the comfort of knowing that she was in perfect health.

My best love to Mrs. Handcock; I grieve to hear that she suffers so much from the cramp, 'tis a most disagreeable companion, as I know by experience; I have found great relief from rubbing my legs with a hard brush before I go to bed, which very much promotes circulation; I wish she would try it; it can do her no harm, and I hope it may do her good. Do pray write me a line before you set out, that I may have the pleasure of knowing when to expect your arrival in England. My best wishes attend you, my dearest Mrs. Vesey. God grant you a safe passage and journey, and us a happy meeting, and a cheerful winter!

LETTER CLIII.

Paris, *Oct.* 18, 1782.

DID it ever enter into your imagination, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that you should receive a Letter from me dated from Paris *? For my own part, it is not a month ago when I should as soon have thought of addressing you from Constantinople or Pekin. Here however I am; but instead of disporting myself with the fine sights of this place, impatiently longing for what I would prefer to all the fine sights in the world, a view of the cliffs of Dover. Our journey was passed in such a manner as to afford little more than a view of the country.

At Amiens, however, my early rising gave me an opportunity of seeing the cathedral; a most noble and venerable building, and rendered the more striking by the circumstances in which I saw it. The faint glimmering of the twilight through the painted windows; the awful silence, which

* This was the tour which Mrs. Carter made to Paris with Sir William Pulteney and his daughter, now Countess of Bath.

gave no interruption to the chanting of the Morning Hymn; the deep solitude, rendered the more distinguished by a few scattered figures in a posture of devotion, produced an effect more easy for your imagination to feel than for me to describe.

As we set out later than we expected, I visited some other parts of Amiens. In the Church of the Convent of the Paracletes the priest was saying Mass, and consequently the curtain before the chapel undrawn. One of the nuns was kneeling very near the grate, and so elegant a figure I never beheld. Her face was very handsome, and her countenance very interesting; and she performed her devotions with a sobriety of attention that was very striking indeed. Her dress was white, with a black sash, and a veil put on in the most becoming manner, but with beautiful simplicity. If one of our fine drest ladies had been placed near this charming votarist, the contrast of their appearance would have formed a more efficacious lesson against the fopperies and extravagance of the present fashions, than a whole volume of grave remonstrances.

As you are so well acquainted with Paris, I do not attempt to give you any description. Indeed I have seen very few sights, as my intention in coming was not for amusement. Besides, I have been miserably ill with my tiresome head ever since I came

came here. I will not for the present provoke it any more: but hope in about a week, if it please God, to inform you that I am safely landed in dear England. Only think how delightful it will be if you are disembarking at Holyhead, at the same time that I am set on shore at Dover. Adieu, my dear friend. God bless you.

LETTER CLIV.

Deal, *June* 2, 1837.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, for the kind Note, of which I seemed so unworthy. I hope the sleeping draught presented only pleasant dreams to your imagination, and that it led your friend to you through the *ivory gate* *, and placed her close to your elbow in that very chair which you so kindly had appropriated for her ease. If on the contrary the vision was conducted to you through the *horny passage* *, it would have

* Alluding to the classical fiction concerning dreams, by which those that were *false* were supposed to come through the ivory gate of sleep, and those that were *true* through that which was made of horn. Both Horace and Virgil have copied this

have represented her to you languishing on a pillow, with a fever, sore throat, and the same distracting pains in her head, which obliged her to leave you with so much precipitation on Tuesday night.

Nothing but the incapacity of writing could have kept me so long from conversing with you; but indeed I have been extremely ill, which I would not tell you, but at the same time when I thank God I am getting so very much better. The abscess in my throat is broke, the pain in my head is greatly abated, and I slept freer from fever last night than for any night this last week. I am very low and languid, but that must be expected; but I hope now, as the worst symptoms are mended, that in a few days I shall return to my usual state.

Pray give my best love to dear Mrs. Handcock, and tell her I shall think of her much oftener than when I see the beautiful cup which she sent me. I shall certainly value it as her gift: but I can never drink my tea out of it with equal pleasure as when she poured it out for me. I must and I will hope that we shall meet again next winter. With my kind compliments and best wishes to Mr. Vesey, do pray tell him that he cannot spend the winter

poetic idea from Homer; but the former appears to have made use of it with much greater judgment than the latter has done. See Horat. Lib. iii. Od. 27. 141: and Virg. Æneid. vi. v. 898.

any

any where so well, or so comfortably for his health, as in London. Tell him too that whatever company he may see, he will find none who feels greater pleasure in coming to his house, nor who feels more obliged to him for being so frequently and so kindly admitted into it than I do.

You have a malicious intention to make me vain of Mr. Walpole: but I value his esteem too much to render myself unworthy of it.

Adieu, my dear friend, do pray write to me as often as you can, and tell me how you do, and what you do, and all the agreeable things that other people do and say, from the influence of your enchanted castle. I hope the fear of losing any of your trees is over. If any such attempt is made surely the Hamadryads, who must delight to shade your bower, will scream in the ears of the feller till he drops his axe. Do kindly let Miss Clarke have the enclosed.

LETTER CLV.

Deal, *June* 11, 1783.

YOUR evening at Chelsea, my dear Mrs. Vesey, was accompanied by so many pleasant circumstances, that I hope you enjoyed it in all perfection; that your mind was as serene as the elements around you, and your heart in unison with that of the sweet enchanting mistress * of that delightful villa, which certainly is one of the prettiest places imagination can fancy. A thousand thanks for the kindness which prompted you to form a wish that I could be of the party. That wish was the next best thing to my being actually there, but wisely has Providence ordained that all our wishes, even seemingly reasonable ones, should not be gratified.

This delightful evening, I fear, was succeeded by a sleepless night, an evil you too commonly experience, and in which your imagination probably conjured up only melancholy phantoms of your impending journey, and the separating sea. I would

* Lady Dartrey.

fain

fain hope they are merely phantoms: or at least that we may look forward with hope, to the pleasing prospect that Mr. Vesey will be prevailed on to return to England next winter. Indeed this is an important point to me. I find that every year helps to strengthen my attachment and affection to my friends; and the having passed so many delightfully social hours with you and Mrs. Handcock last winter; and in a manner so much less interrupted than usual, has helped to endear you the more tenderly to my heart.

I am, I thank God, very much better, than when I last gave you an account of myself, having been for some days quite free from the illness which seems to have alarmed you, and which to say truth I brought from London with me. As for my head cela va toujours son train.

Have you consulted Dr. Warren on the safety of Mr. Vesey's undertaking to leave England? This will surely be highly proper both on his account and your own, as it would be so particularly distressing if he should be taken ill on the road. My love to dear Mrs. Handcock, you do not name her in your Letter, and I am sure she would always send me some kind message. I would not give a pin for formal compliments, but every little douceur of expression is of the highest importance from those we love, and particularly so when we know they love

us;

us; therefore I beg you will not again cheat me of my due.

Do pray write to me as often as you can, and send me some franks directed to yourself. My kind wishes to Mr. Vesey, and do not fail to remind him that he is engaged in honor to invite me to many a cheerful dinner next winter, and assure him I will be as agreeable and lively as ever I can. Adieu, my dear friend. Heaven bless you.

LETTER CLVI.

Deal, *July 5*, 1783.

You would sooner have received my thanks, my dear Mrs. Vesey, for your kind enquiry, but a bad fit of the head-ache which left me languid and good for nothing prevented my writing. I have I assure you quite got over the illness I brought from London with me, and am returned in general to pretty much my old state, and much reason I have to be thankful, and I hope I am, that that state is no worse. Indeed the admonitions of my growing old, are so very gentle compared with what

what many others experience, that it is more necessary for me to contemplate my years than my infirmities, in order to prepare me for the conclusion of them.

I had begun this Letter a week ago, and was interrupted by company, and I have ever since been too ill to return to it; the two last days were almost entirely spent on my pillow. I am, I thank God, better to day a great deal; but though I did not find myself equal to accepting an invitation to a large party in a very small room, I can with great delight enjoy a tête à tête with so dear a friend; particularly where the discourse is carried on without any exertion of my voice; which would be quite an effort, and to say truth I do not think I should be equal to it, even was you just now to pop into my room. The very thought enlivens me; and makes me indulge the hope, (which to give up would terribly distress me) of occupying the rush chair which you have so kindly appropriated to my next winter's visits. Indeed when I heard Mr. Vesey mention his intention of going, he declared, that he fully meant to return next winter; surely he will not cruelly disappoint so many people, who love both him and you, and likewise dear Mrs. Handcock; though you never mention her to me. I will, however, send my love to her, whether you give it or not.

Mrs,

Mrs. Pennington and Montagu have just been here, and desire to be most kindly remembered to you all. As it has not been my fault that I did not answer your Letter so soon as usual, I hope you will let me hear from you the first half hour you have to bestow; and not punish my heart for the faults of my poor head. Adieu, my dear friend. God bless you.

LETTER CLVII.

Deal, *Aug.* 8, 1783.

A MISERABLE aching head will not allow me to express half the joy I feel in the hope of seeing my dear friends of Clarges Street in my own little abode. But what do you mean by a breakfast my dear Mrs. Vesey? No breakfast shall you have unless you dine with me too; why I have a couple of chickens that are actually fattening because they are innocent food for Mr. Vesey. Pray spend as much time with me as you can spare. I shall be happy to see you any day after Sunday, and be so good as to let me know by the return of Post

Post what day you will come, and at what hour you wish to have your breakfast and dinner ready. Remember there will be a fine moon; but if you are kindly disposed to make a longer stay, I have one spare bed for you, and I can contrive another for dear Mrs. Handcock, and I dare say I can get a clean private lodging for Mr. Vesey within two or three doors of my own house.

I do not at all approve of your scheme of surprize, suppose par exemple you had come in such a manner this week, you might have found me flown to Dover on a visit to dear Lady Dartrey. They are all on their road at present towards Tunbridge. When I see you I will tell you the reason of this change of plan; but my miserable head will not allow it at present.

Do not fail writing by return of Post, that I may know the day and hour when I shall be so happy as to see you. And pray come as early as you can, both for my sake and your own, that you may not be fatigued by the heat of the day, which is still less pleasant than the morning, though much cooler than it has been.

I cannot express what I feel when I think I shall see you so soon, and that you are actually within a drive of me *, when I was doubtful whether you

* Mr. Vesey was then at Margate, having been suddenly ordered to the sea coast.

were not travelling towards Holyhead. I need not say how much I shall long for to-morrow's Post, which is to fix the time of your coming to Deal. En attendant my best wishes attend you all. Alas! my poor head!

LETTER CLVIII.

Deal, *Sept.* 23, 1783.

Your Letter, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, though dated the 18th, did not reach Deal till Sunday night. I should, however, have answered your kind enquiries yesterday, but was too ill to write without more difficulty than you would wish: I am not much better to day, but I will no longer defer thanking you as being such a frail machine, I know not when I may be in a better capacity. Probably my being so extremely uncomfortable is caused by such a long succession of very damp weather, which is of all others the most unfriendly to my constitution, or composition, which you will. As you say nothing to the contrary, I hope none of you are particularly affected by it in your health, though it must

must very much interrupt the pleasure of your walks and airings. Do not, however, I beg you, be driven too precipitately from the coast; October may wear the placid smiles which more naturally belong to September, and is often, in this country particularly, a most delightful month.

It would make me very happy to pay you a visit at Margate, as you so kindly press it, but alas it is impracticable. There is at present in this place one of my oldest friends, of above forty years standing, whom I could not think of leaving while she stays here. When she is gone, I have long promised Mrs. Pennington to spend a few days with her, and she would be sadly disappointed if I did not come; and if none of these impediments were in the way, my health is so precarious and uncertain, that I I could not think of running the risque either of being troublesome to you, or of being mortified by the incapacity of enjoying the pleasure of your dear society when within my reach.

How I should love to ramble with you in search of every vestige of our Saxon ancestors, in the spot* where they first took possession of a distracted kingdom, which they afterwards raised to so much dignity and glory. *History* should be of our party, and restore every monument to its ori-

* The isle of Thanet, in which Hengist and Horsa landed.

ginal

ginal form: while *Imagination* on the other hand, should point to the desolated remains, and inspire every soothing charm of poetical and sentimental melancholy. Far different is this kind of feeling, from that which is excited by the view of the present change and cotemporary ruin, such as you describe both in the moral and natural state of that long loved abode *, where we have past so many delightful hours.

I experienced something of the same kind last spring, when I saw Mrs. R— and Colonel T— flourishing away in the open window of a house where I have so often listened for hours to the wisdom and virtue of dear Lady Frances Coningesby. Such events however, like all others, have their use. We naturally in such a case compare the past with the present inhabitants: and the heart, which is always more in earnest than the understanding, places the contrast between their characters in the strongest point of view, and all its feelings determine on the side of virtue.—My head is very confused, and whether I have exprest myself intelligibly I leave you to find out. Pour moi, si je ne comprends pas, au moins je me devine.

* Probably the house in Bolton Row, which Mr. Vesey had quitted.

Love

Love and best wishes to Mrs. Handcock and Mr. Vesey. My respects when you see her to Lady Drogheda. Let me hear from you soon pray. I have not any frank to dear Lady Dartrey. I am sorry for you that Mr. Walpole is not likely to be of your parties next winter. For myself, I have no wish beyond the inhabitants, et de tems en tems, our select and common friends. Miss Cooper talks of a hope of seeing you, for which she expresses a most earnest desire: but whether poor soul she will be able to come to town, is I fear very doubtful. She mentions your being removed to Ramsgate, but as you do not, I naturally suppose she is misinformed. Adieu! my dear friend; I cannot help hoping I shall have another sight of you before you leave this country. God bless you.

LETTER CLIX.

Deal, *June* 5, 1784.

It was not possible for me to write to you yesterday: and nothing but a very strong inclination could tempt me, unwell as I am, to write to you to day. But, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, I know you will wish to hear that I am got safe to the end of my journey, of which, thank God, I can inform you: but I cannot render my Letter amusing by the recital of any strange adventures. As I had not set my heart upon being robbed quite so much as you did, on our return from Hampton, I was not much disappointed by meeting nobody upon the road, whom, even you, could have conjured into a highwayman, except one fat gentleman with a portmanteau buckled before him. The day was very favorable to me in respect to the heat: indeed I scarcely ever felt more intense cold; and there was not a ray of sunshine to enliven the prospects.

I never stopt except to change the chaise, &c. till I got to Canterbury, so probably you may exult to think how often I regretted the refusal of your kind

kind offer of a pye. However I kept myself from starving by the help of some good bitter penny plumb cakes. At Canterbury I spent two quiet pleasant hours with a friend, who refreshed me with coffee in a little gothic abode, shaded by trees, which I think you would admire as much as I do *. Her house is one of the few remaining original buildings, which surround the venerable Cathedral, and it is totally unsophisticated by sashed windows, or any other modern foppery.

I got to Deal about eight o'clock, and passed the melancholy Church yard which conceals the dear friend †, who always used to welcome my return with looks and expressions of the most cordial affection, and heartfelt kindness. You will easily imagine how very much I must feel the sad vacancy, that her loss makes me experience in this place; but she I doubt not is reaping the fruits of a well spent life: and I will not repine, for Heaven graciously has still spared me many and very great comforts. I have kept myself as much employed as possible, to banish painful reflections: and hope soon to be able to rejoice in her happiness with a less painful sense of my own heavy loss. I found

* A small appendage to the Deanery, in which Mrs. Blomer, daughter to a Prebendary of Canterbury, and one of Mrs. Carter's earliest friends, resided.

† Mrs. Underdown, a very amiable and excellent woman.

all my family, I thank God, very well. The Dr. and Mrs. Pennington made me a flying visit yesterday; but I hope next week to see them in a more comfortable way, and in less hurry.

And now is the time, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to return my best thanks to you and Mr. Vesey, and Mrs. Handcock, for all your kindness, and the many very happy days, and delightful hours, which you so indulgently allowed me to spend with you during the last winter. God grant we may see as much of each other the next. In the mean time I will hope for a sight of you all when you are at Margate, and I will give you just such a little dinner as you were so good as to be pleased with, and eat with me last summer. Coming to see folks in a *little* way must make a pleasing variety to your usual mode of life; so I beg you will come here and change your every day scene, as often as you find yourself inclined; you will be certain to find a heart rejoiced to see, and proud to entertain you with its best, not only food, but affections.

When you see Miss Hamilton*, be so good, with my love, to tell her I will write to her very soon. And pray let me hear from you very soon. God bless you, my very dear friend.

* Now Mrs. Dickenson.

LETTER CLX.

Deal, *July* 10, 1784.

It does my heart good, my dear friend, that you so kindly regret the absence of one, who is so far entitled to your remembrance, as she always recollects with tender affection and gratitude those hours which she passes with so heartfelt an enjoyment in your society. You cannot imagine—yes, but I hope you can—how happy you made me, by the hope of our meeting in town next winter. Many winters beneath the stars, neither of us can expect to see: but whatever be the number which it pleases God to allow us, may we spend together, and by every mutual assistance of virtuous friendship, endeavour to improve them so as to enliven our hopes of meeting again, after the few short dark days are past, in those bright regions, where "The sun shall no more go down, nor the moon withdraw her light."

What a picture did you draw of the death of poor Lady H——! Such a conclusion of a life so spent is awfully striking! The meditation on so terrible an event ought to excite the most

lively gratitude of all who have been so fortunate as to be educated in happier and right principles, and placed out of the reach of such fearful temptations; and should quicken their attention to act suitably to their advantages.

Lord and Lady Dartrey must, I am sure, have suffered greatly from their view of that shocking duel *. It is dreadful to see how an indulgence of pride and revenge transforms human creatures into demons.

Why would you not tell me how you liked the elegy I transcribed for you in my last Letter? Perhaps you thought the first lines a concetto; but consider that a concetto never touches the heart, as surely these lines do.

When do you come to Margate? The weather now is delightful, neither too hot nor too cold, just fit for travelling, and enjoying the sea side. My love to dear Mrs. Handcock, and do pray tell Mr. Vesey I have got some chickens fattening *à son intention*; if he will do them and me the favour to come and eat them. Be so good as to procure a frank for the enclosed Letter for Mrs. Henry, and send it to the post. When I last had the pleasure

* A duel which took place near an inn where they accidentally were, and which Lord Dartrey in vain endeavoured to prevent. It ended in the death of one of the parties. The other was tried for it some years after and acquitted.

of

of hearing from her, she talked of visiting her friends in England next spring, who will I am sure all be most happy to see her.

How could you think that it could be any secret that Lord and Lady Dartrey saw the duel? I read an account of their being spectators of this unhappy affair, and trying to prevent it, in a newspaper: though it did not form so affecting a picture as that drawn by your exquisite pencil. Adieu, my dear friend. Pray write soon, for I long to know when you will be in this country. God bless you.

LETTER CLXI.

Deal, *July* 30, 1784.

INDEED, my dear Mrs. Vesey, I have often longed to thank you all for your very kind visit, but my wretched head has been so thoroughly uncomfortable almost every day since I saw you, as rendered me quite unfit for writing. It is this morning almost as bad as it can be, but coute qu'il coute I must tell you how sensibly I feel the kindness of your Letter, and moreover give you what intelligence

gence I can of our friends. Lady Dartrey is you know a very idle correspondent; but I had the pleasure of hearing not long since that she was quite recovered, from Miss Hamilton.

I had a Letter from Mrs. Montagu about ten days ago, dated the 15th, she was then on her road, in most delightful health and spirits, travelling over hill and dale in a whisky, the next enviable conveyance to a hippogriph*. The name of her northern abode is Denton, near Newcastle. Mrs. Feilding is at Lord Winchelsea's, in Charles-street, going to inoculate her little boy. All the rest of your frinds, that I have any correspondence with, are quite well.

I believe you have drawn a very strong likeness of Lady Mary Coke. I congratulate you on the acquisition. Pray had my friend, whom you so handsomely drive off in a post-chaise, any name? And what is it? I feared by Lady Herries's account of herself that her health was in a very bad state; but as she has always found relief from the sea, I hope it will now have its usual effect.

I perfectly agree with you that it is a very defective description of the sea, that is confined merely to it's *utility*; but indeed the idea of utility ought

* The animal half horse half griffin, which carried Astolpho, in Ariosto.

to

to extend much beyond the necessities of corporeal existence. It is a striking instance of the wisdom and goodness of our beneficent Creator, that he has adapted the universe to every part of our composition: that while we are surrounded by objects which are so admirably formed for the supply of the exigencies of our animal and social nature, they are decorated with such a profusion of sublime and beautiful scenery as charm the imagination, and afford a noble entertainment to the highest faculties of the soul.

We have been in great agitation in this place on account of a murder committed on Monday last, at a place about two or three miles from this place. The utmost activity and diligence has been exerted to find the murderer, and I am glad to say they have succeeded. He was for some hours last night under examination by my brother, who sent him to jail. The subject of this dreadful affair was a poor young woman, who was walking to Sandwich with a bundle. The wretch threw her into a ditch in order to rob her, and there she was smothered. A boy about thirteen years old saw the whole transaction, and gave a very clear account of it: but was so sadly ignorant in other respects, that my brother could not administer an oath to him. However there will be sufficient evidence, from a handkerchief that was found on the prisoner, which the poor

poor mother of the girl swore to be her's. He was exhorted to confess; but answered he would confess only to God. He attempted to prove an alibi; but was seen by so many people near the time at this place, that there seems no doubt of his person, which is marked very strongly by a wound on his cheek, which he received in the engagement with the Ville de Paris. He is a Dane, but was in our fleet *. I have writ you a long story, but we talk of nothing else. And have only room to add, God bless you all.

LETTER CLXII.

Deal, *Aug.* 21, 1784.

If I was possessed of that magic wand with which you compliment me, I should certainly wave it, my dear friend, to produce a carriage, to convey you through the air, or on the surface of a

* He was convicted at the assizes at Maidstone and hanged. There could be no doubt of his guilt, and, unless the editor's memory deceives him, he confessed it after his trial.

smooth

smooth wave, to prevent your being shaken by the jumble of a terrestrial vehicle, and then I might hope to receive you all once more in my little quiet abode. It is mortifying to think of your being within sixteen miles of me, without seeing you: but I rely on your kindness, that you would give me that pleasure, if it was not absolutely inconvenient to you, and I will not teize you by solicitations. Indeed the days are now so much shortened, that such an expedition would be of little comfort on either side; and I can scarcely wish you to undertake it, unless you could bestow more days on me than one. In that case I could accommodate you with two beds, and I am sure I need not say how happy I should be to have you beneath my roof. So if you can bring this scheme to bear, I will endeavour to procure a room for Mr. Vesey at a private house close by. If I must renounce the hope of seeing you here, like you, I will look forward to our meeting next winter, and God grant it may be happily!

Have you read Captain Cook's last vayages? I have just finished them. The description of the savage inhabitants of the southern climates is a fine eloge of *a state of nature*, of which one species of philosophers is fond of speaking in such rapturous terms! I was heartily glad to take my leave of these barbarians, and to find myself among the harmless gentle

gentle contented race, that dwell on the borders of the artic circle. Placed on the shore of a frozen ocean, surrounded by mountains of perennial snow, listening to the howl of stormy winds, the bellowing of sea horses, and the growl of hungry bears, these poor people think no country under heaven so highly favoured as their own. Favoured in one respect indeed they eminently are, as they enjoy the blessings of a mild government, and the illumination of the Christian religion. Ever since I read this account, I have felt a very high respect for the Russians, to whose humanity and instructions the inhabitants of Kamtschatka owe their inestimable advantages.

I am glad you have the pleasure of the society of the Duchess Dowager of Portland at Margate. I will trouble you to give my most respectful compliments to her Grace the first time you see her.

I hope, as you do not mention your teeth, that the dentist has finished all his terrible operations, and that you are now enjoying the good effects of them. I rejoice to hear so good an account of Mr. Vesey's health, and beg my best wishes to him for his further improvement. I am content that he shall hob and nob with the sea nymphs at Margate, provided he remembers his engagements to me in Clarges-street in the winter. My love to dear Mrs. Handcock. My friend Mrs. Cosnan is at Margate;

Margate: have you got acquainted with her? I have for a long course of years been greatly indebted to her affection. She was a daughter of Sir Thomas D'Aeth, and except one family, the first person in this county, who honoured me with any particular notice. Adieu, my dear friend, if I am not to have the pleasure of seeing you again, or indeed if I am to be made so happy, I beg you will write to me as often as ever you can. God bless you. Good night.

LETTER CLXIII.

Deal, *Aug.* 28, 1784.

YOUR writing to me, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, at a time when your mind was agitated and opprest, was giving me a very kind testimony of your friendship. People impart their joys at random, but in any distress we wish to repose our sorrows in some heart on whose sympathy we can depend.

Quandi piu tra gli affanni altri si duole
Par che de' cari suvi più si rammenti,

E benche

E bench sien lontani, il dolor suole
Con forte fantasia farli presenti.
Meditiamo gli affetti, e le parole
Onde ci renderian lievi i tormenti,
E con quei sensi in lor persona esspressi
Pensiamo a loro, e consoliamo noi stessi.

Every body, at some time or other, has felt this, but Carlo Maggi expresses it so much better, that I could not help making this long quotation.

It gave me great joy to find by the latter part of your Letter, that your terrors were removed about Mr. Vesey. His disorder was probably an effect of this uncommon weather, which scarcely any constitution can stand. I am heartily sorry for the misfortune which has befallen poor Thomas, and for the distress so melancholy an accident must have occasioned in your family. Are you acquainted with any of the governors of St. Luke's Hospital? This was instituted some years ago, as a relief to the ruinous expences of Bedlam; and the late Admiral Smith, who I think was one of the governors, told me that great care was taken of the unhappy patients. It will be worth your enquiring after, if the poor man continues in his miserable state. I honor the rest of the servants for their tenderness to him, which I should not have doubted, even if you had not named it, from every thing that I have ever seen of them.

Pray

Pray wish Mrs. Hughes joy for me of her son's promotion, which I thank you for mentioning. Mrs. Cosnan's relation to Sir Cloudesley Shovel is, that he was second husband to her grandmother. This Lady, by her first husband, had two sons, Sir John and Sir James Narborough. These young gentlemen went, I believe, as volunteers with their father-in-law, Sir C. Shovel, and perished with him in that fatal expedition; and their fortune came to their sister, Lady D'Aeth, who was Mrs. Cosnan's mother. I have heard that somebody to whom Sir Thomas D'Aeth once showed the monument erected to these unfortunate young men, on reading the inscription said—" It is a bad wind, Sir Thomas, that blows nobody any good *."

In my morning view of the sea, I look towards the point of the North Foreland, with the tenderest affection, and most cordial good wishes. Do, pray, my dear friend, let me very often know how you go on. Pray tell Mr. Vesey, with my best com-

* Sir Thomas had married the sister of Sir John Narborough, and after the unfortunate end of him and his brother James, (whom Mrs. Carter by mistake calls Sir James) became entitled in her right to the Knolton estate. The monument alluded to is in Knolton church, and on it is represented a ship in a storm driving on the rocks, in memory of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's shipwreck with them on the rocks of Scilly, Oct. 22, 1707.

pliments, that we had two balloon philosophers here yesterday, one of whom was the famous Mr. Blanchard, who examined the South Foreland, to see if it was a proper spot from which Mongolfier might in October set off in his aerial vehicle, and fly over the sea to Calais; they quite approved it.—These gentlemen then set out yesterday for Dieppe to prepare some necessary materials for the balloon that is to set off from Lord Foley's garden. Adieu, my dearest friend. Every happiness attend you.

LETTER CLXIV.

Deal, *Oct.* 12, 1784.

As Mr. Vesey has no appearance of being particularly ill, I hope his complaints arise from the great change in the weather, which must be oppressively hot to all who cannot venture to pass most part of the day in the open air, at least in the draught of open doors and windows.

It grieves me, my dear friend, to find your spirits are in so low a state; mine are not very well calculated at present to endeavour to raise them: yet I

spent

spent the last week very pleasantly. I past two days with my nephew at Eastry *. I rejoice very much in your favorable opinion of him, which indeed he deserves. for he is a most valuable young man. His life is irreproachable, and I am told by all who have been witnesses to it, for I have not had that satisfaction myself, that he performs the sacred duties of his profession with the greatest propriety and reverence. He talked to me with great delight of the day which he passed at Margate.

From Eastry Mrs. Cosnan sent for me to Wingham, where I staid three days. The weather was so beautifully fine that we passed many hours in the garden, or sitting on a bench at the end of the grove, near a sweet stream, soothed by the gentle fall of the water over a little cascade, and we never returned to the house till the sun had shed his last rays on the extremity of a dark walk of thick trees. I often secretly, and sometimes openly, wished for you. Mrs. Cosnan regretted her having seen so little of you whilst she was at Margate. There was formerly a religious foundation at Wingham. The house is supposed to have belonged to the superior. It is divided by a noble great hall.

* The Editors elder brother, the Rev. Thomas Pennington, Rector of Thorley, in Herts, and of Kingsdown, in Kent.

Many

Many of the apartments are modernized, but the garden front retains a good deal of its ancient gothic form. Mr. Cosnan has new-furnished some of the rooms with such an elegant simplicity, so totally void of all glaring ornaments, that I am sure it would delight the justness of your taste.

While I was at Wingham I received a message from Mr. Pulteney, saying he would call on me. He entered the room, and from behind him sprung Miss Pulteney, and flew up to me with such a natural vivacity of affection that would have made you love her. It was a perfect surprize to me, for I did not know Mr. Pulteney was gone for her. You, my dear friend, who are always so fond of and kind to young people, I hope you will, when you go to town, give her an opportunity of waiting on you. The being introduced into polite and improving society will be the best means of forming her manners, and this advantage she can scarcely have met with in a convent. I am sure you will love her when you know her, but at present she is, with strangers, timidity personified.

When I last heard from Mrs. Montagu she gave me a most comfortable account of her health. She has again been travelling over hill and dale in a whiskey. I am heartily glad that the loss of her companion has not prevented her taking this exercise, which I believe is of very great consequence

to

to her health, and which I was very fearful she would have given up.

I have not the honor of being acquainted with the Dean of Canterbury any otherwise than by his character, which I exceedingly respect, as he is universally well spoken of as a remarkably good man*. Pray assure Mr. Vesey of my best wishes for the amendment of his health. It is very unlucky that you have no acquaintance left at Margate, as society and friendly chit-chat would very much tend to make him forget some of his complaints.

My love to dear Mrs. Handcock. Adieu, my dear friend. I have been a very poor animal all day, but you seemed so anxiously to wish I would write soon that I could resist no longer, though fully aware nothing can be more stupid; and in return for this effort I entreat you to write to me as often as you possibly can. You well know how very delightful a conversation with you, even by Letter, when it cannot be di viva voce, is to the heart of her who truly loves you.

* Dr. Horne, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, a man who had few equals in learning, piety, and sweetness of manners.

LETTER CLXV.

Deal, *Oct.* 29, 1784.

As I heard you were so soon to leave Margate, I deferred thanking you, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, for your very kind Letter, or rather billet, till I could welcome you on your return to Clarges-street, where, at the end of about two months, I hope for the happiness of spending many a delightful day and hour with you. Indeed it has been very mortifying to me, that at the distance of so few miles I should have seen very little more of you than if you had been on the other side of St. George's Channel. My only consolation has been the flattering myself that you would have come oftener to me if you could.

Though I have always honored you for having the simplicity of a little child, I could with a hearty good will whip you for having its imprudence, and making yourself sick with unripe fruit. A friend of mine, who is now here, complains of just the same forge in her stomach as you do, but instead of excess, erred by abstemiousness, and took it into her head to live upon milk like a cat; so that when she

she first came here she was so weak that I was quite alarmed. By being prevailed upon to return to the diet of other Christian creatures, to my great comfort she has astonishingly recovered her strength and looks. As to perfect health, it belongs neither to her, nor you, nor me; and therefore all we have to do is, without fretting or struggling, to submit humbly and with quiet resignation to our lot, and be very thankful to the great Dispenser of all mercies that it is no worse. Let us with gratitude look around us, and we shall see, for one as well off, twenty equally, nay, perhaps more deserving, in a much more uncomfortable situation than ourselves; and these thoughts ought to make us bear our trifling infirmities with patience, and resign all into his hands who knows what is best for us.

Though winter had not put on his fur mantle when you wrote, his warmest clothing has since, I am sure, been scarcely sufficient to secure him against the cold, which has for some days been more intense than almost I ever remember it without frost.

I have had the comfort of Mrs. Douglas with me for a much shorter time than I could have wished, but I could not be so selfish to endeavour to dissuade her from accepting a very convenient and pleasant conveyance to town with Mr. and the Miss Chaliès. You, who love young people, would I think by very much delighted with these sweet in-

nocent girls *, who, with very great information and high accomplishments, are totally free from all airs and affectation. They have a most excellent example in their charming mother, whom I knew before they were born, and who certainly is *la raison même*. Do not stare and be scandalized at this description, for I assure you she is entirely free from the severity and superciliousness which too often accompanies so regular a character when it is not softened by so sweet a temper, and such sound principles as operate on the whole behaviour of Mrs. Chaliè. I am happy to say she stays a little longer with us, for the sake of sea-bathing, to which Dr. Douglas ordered her, and from which she has already received great benefit.

Do pray let me know very soon how you all do. Adieu, my dear friend; God bless and protect you, and keep Mr. Vesey in the tolerable health he at present enjoys.

* The eldest of these young ladies married Mr. Skreene, a Somersetshire gentleman, by whom she left an only son; the younger married Mr. Garthshore, afterwards a Lord of the Admiralty. Both are now deceased, but their excellent and amiable mother still survives.

LETTER CLXVI.

Deal, *June* 7, 1785.

As you will immediately guess the reason, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, why I did not acquaint you with the day of my leaving town, I will make no apology for an omission that you will I am sure feel as it was meant, as a proof of my affection. It was a great satisfaction to me that I was not obliged to leave you till you could admit the visits of your other friends, which I hope you now do.

The sad suspence which rendered tranquillity impracticable is now over, and every unnecessary indulgence and voluntary aggravation of grief will help to prevent that resignation and submission which I am sure you are persuaded is an absolute duty. Endeavour then, my dear friend, to give the most unequivocal proof of acquiescence in the divine appointment, by enjoying with cheerful gratitude the many blessings which are still allotted you.

I heartily thank you for that confidence in my affection, from which you have allowed me to share the melancholy days which you have lately spent. If it pleases God to continue us yet a few years

years longer in the world, I hope and trust we shall spend many cheerful days together. In this wish I most sincerely include dear Mrs. Handcock, to whom I beg my most affectionate love *.

When you see Mr. Walpole, be so good as to make my kindest compliments to him, and let him know how much I regretted being out when he was so good as to call on me. Do pray write me just a line or two, as no information about you can be half so satisfactory as from yourself, and I do not think that writing to me can possibly do you any hurt. Adieu, my dear friend. God preserve and support you.

LETTER CLXVII.

Estray, *June* 16, 1785.

MANY thanks to you, my dear friend, for kindly giving me the comfort of receiving an account of you from your own hand. Your ob-

* This consolation relates to the death of Mr. Vesey, which had taken place before Mrs. Carter left London.

servations on the consequences of long life must be felt by every heart, and I experienced it deeply on my return to Deal, where I lived for many years in a large circle of relations and friends. Of all who once used to greet me with looks and expressions of cordial love and affection, not one remained: some were removed by absence, and others were for ever separated from all human connection with me by the grave. There are occasions when such changes will and ought to be felt, but it is our own fault if they deprive us of the general comforts of life. Perfect happiness was evidently not designed to be our lot beneath the sun, but the divine goodness has mixed the evils of life with so great a proportion of good as will compose our minds into cheerful content, if we do not frustrate its gracious intentions by an unwarrantable indulgence and by a voluntary aggravation of our grief. Endeavour then, my dear friend, with all your might to avoid every unnecessary recollection of painful subjects, and by the blessing of God, I trust your future life may pass smoothly on in tranquillity and comfort.

Pray assure Mr. Walpole of my affectionate remembrance, and thank him from me for his very kind attention to you and dear Mrs. Handcock. I rejoice that he has prevailed on you to take the air, which is one of the best mechanical helps for the recovery of your spirits.—Do pray let me hear from

from you as often as you can, and let me know every particular of your situation, in which I am sure you must be sensible how tenderly I am interested.

I came to this place on Monday, and am to return to Deal to-morrow. I feel great comfort in being situated so near the Doctor and my sister Pennington: their family are a great delight and pleasure to me: my nephews promise to be a comfort to our declining age, which must amply repay to their parents the trouble and anxiety they have caused them *. This is a very sweet village, and all the country round it very beautiful, but the weather is at present very unfavorable to my rambles. Very near this house is a spot, on which stood a palace of some of our Saxon Kings †, and at two miles distance a village, once dedicated to Woden, and which still retains his name ‡. Hap-

* The Editor hopes he shall be excused for observing, in justice to his brother and himself, that this expression has no reference to any other trouble and anxiety than that which parents so excellent and affectionate must naturally have felt for the welfare of their children during the important period of their youth and education.

† The mansion-house of Eastry-Court.

‡ The village of Woodnesborough, supposed to be a corruption of Woodensborough. A high artificial mount is still remaining near the church, which has been thought to be connected with the worship of the Saxon idol.

pily

pily the wild and barbarous rites, by which this idol was formerly celebrated, are now converted into the reasonable and gentle devotion of a Christian church, which stands on a rising ground, and commands one of the finest views imaginable.

My very affectionate love to dear Mrs. Handcock. All this family desire to be remembered to you both in the kindest and most affectionate manner. Adieu, my dear friend. Be good and write soon. God bless and preserve you.

LETTER CLXVIII.

Deal, *June* 11, 1786.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, for so kindly complying with my request. Pray never think of throwing away a pen that is still capable of giving your friends so much pleasure, and pray do not fancy you write unintelligibly, for I met with not the least difficulty in reading your welcome Letter. Indeed my heart would have been a considerable loser if it had not perfectly comprehended your dear lamentations over the empty chair. I look forward with delightful hope to the prospect of resuming my claim to it next winter.

Fye

Fye upon Lord M——! What business had he to expose a life of so high reputation, and so valuable to his friends, in a duel? One pities a young officer, who is drawn into this abominable practice, but the courage of Lord M—— had been sufficiently proved*; I rejoice, however, that by all accounts he is so likely to do well. Surely in this inventive age some means might be found to transfer the point of honor to something less destructive, since it is the point of honor it seems that is to usurp the right of principle, and to regulate human actions.—Apropos of the point of honor. I have just been reading in an ancient account of India, that the women there were remarkably chaste, unless the gallant was able to present them with an elephant; and this temptation was considered as so very irresistible, that in that case a lady might sacrifice her virtue without forfeiting her character. This sounds very ridiculous, but it seems the riding upon an elephant is in that country a mark of the highest dignity. Do not you wish that the point of honor in this country likewise consisted in yielding to no other temptation? For as elephants are not so easily imported as Norway rats, there might be a good chance of starving the proctors.

* Perhaps Lord Macartney, if this was the date of his duel with General Stuart. Mrs. Carter knew him, and had a high respect for him.

Do

Do pray get to Tunbridge as soon as the town grows empty, and the heat and dust intolerable. Let me hear from yourself very soon, and do tell me all you are doing, have done, and mean to do. I wish you would have told me I might enclose my Letters to the Bishop of St. Asaph. Adieu, my dear friend. Love to Mrs. Handcock.

LETTER CLXIX.

Deal, *Sept.* 10, 1786.

It was rather a surprize to me, my dear Mrs. Vesey, to find by a Letter from Miss Bowdler that you most iniquitously reproach me for not writing, whereas I apprehend the complaint to be entirely on the other side of the question. I wrote to you long since, and never have received any answer from you; and a head almost perpetually aching gives one very little inclination to write two Letters for one. I should indeed have got over this difficulty if I had not had frequent opportunities of hearing *of* you, though you were so graceless never to let me hear *from* you.

Miss Bowdler tells me you want to hear something of dear Lady Cremorne. I had a Letter from

from her a few days ago, in which she told me she had laid aside her scheme of going to Tunbridge, and was advised to carry her sweet little girl into Wales to drink goats' whey. I thought you must have heard this from Lord Cremorne, as I find he is at Tunbridge. God grant that the journey into Wales may be of service to the dear child. My heart aches at the description which this truly affectionate mother gives me of the delicate state of her darling's health.

I am glad to find you have at length taken yourself and dear Mrs. Handcock out of the suffocation and solitude of London. I hope you will find the pure air and pleasant society of Tunbridge much better for your spirits than breathing the thick smoke of London, and listening to the scream of *forty a penny ripe pears.*

Mrs. Douglas has been with me about six weeks, and I hope is considerably better than when she first came. This rough weather very much affects her rheumatism and gout, which reconciles me to parting with her, for fear our boisterous climate as the season advances might make her worse. Dr. Douglas has just taken a very pleasant airy house in Saville-row, two very essential points for my sister, who can so very seldom, from her dreadful health, leave her home.

I beg,

I beg, my dear friend, that you will drink a moderate quantity of the Tunbridge waters, which I am persuaded will be of use both to your health and spirits. Of all medicines, mineral waters have the fairest chance of doing good; very unlike the productions of artificial chemistry, the composition is formed by an unerring hand, and every ingredient is mixed in due proportion.

My love to dear Mrs. Handcock. I write this with a most sad and confused aching head, but I was unwilling to lose the opportunity of sending it to London by Mrs. Douglas. Do pray write soon. —No, you will not. I grieve, but cannot help it; and whether you write or not, I must be most affectionately your's, and equally pray for every blessing to attend you.

LETTER CLXX.

Deal, *Oct.* 6, 1786.

It is with regret, my dear Mrs. Vesey, that I direct my answer to your kind Letter to Clarges-street, as I greatly wished you to have stayed

stayed some time longer at Tunbridge, and tried the further effects of the waters, which not only I but Mrs. Montagu thought might be very beneficial to your health. Indeed, if we must not hope for any more favorable weather than we have had for the last three or four days, you may, I think, congratulate yourself in being comfortably fixed in your winter quarters, where in little more than two months I shall hope to take again possession of my comfortable chair, and spend many happy days with you and dear Mrs. Handcock.

I now sit listening to the whistling wind, the dashing rain, and the roaring billows. I might have been entertained with the gayer amusements of a social dinner, to which I was invited to-day, but my head prevented me from going. To an aching head all pleasures languish, except such as can be enjoyed without exertion, amidst the stillness of solitude, and the indulgence of and elbow chair. How thankful ought I to feel that these alleviations are mine, instead of such a condition of life as would have subjected me to hard labour in a lower situation, or to the equally fatiguing task of splendid slavery in a higher.

I had last week the pleasure of a party of our friends from Margate. The Miss Clarkes, and Mr. Walker, and his niece, who all seemed very well. They were so good as to breakfast with me, but the

the season is too far advanced for them to think of spending the day here. I hope they felt no inconvenience from a most furious hurricane, or rather whirlwind, which happened I think before they could have reached Margate, and was felt very violently here. Happily it lasted only a few minutes, for it seemed as if it would tear earth and sea up by the roots. Indeed we have had a great deal of very stormy weather, but intermixed with some sweet, tranquil, autumnal days.

I am just returned from spending a most happy and comfortable week at Eastry, where I had a few days of the delightful weather just mentioned, which I fully enjoyed in rambling about. I took a solitary walk one evening to a church about two miles distant, and sat myself down upon the pedestal of a dial, to survey a prospect with which I think you would have been charmed. Before me was a most beautiful landscape of hill and dale, woodland and open field. Opposite to this the spires of a distant town *, terminated by a long extent of calm blue sea, and the white cliffs of the isle of Thanet. On another side was a rough romantic mount, which sunk abruptly into a deep woody dell †.—Now do

* Sandwich.

† This is the mount of Woodnesborough, mentioned before, from the church-yard of which village is the varied and beautiful prospect which Mrs. Carter describes.

not

not think I have been playing one of your tricks, and describing places and things formed only in your own brilliant imagination; for I really and truly did see all that I have endeavoured to describe. I wish I could complete it by sending you an epitaph, much beyond the common style of church-yard poetry, but it required more time than the setting sun would allow me to make out some of the lines, which were almost effaced by time.

I always leave Eastry with regret; 'tis a most favorite spot of mine, and it joys my heart to see my sister and her family so happy and comfortable. Poor soul! she has but one drawback, and we must all have a something, or we should be too much astached to this world, which is not meant for our abiding place; I mean her constant bad health, which with increasing years produces increasing infirmities. I thank God she was tolerable while I was there, and we enjoyed the beauties of the fine autumnal evenings on a pretty little lawn they have, for her health does not allow of long walks.

Miss Bowdler gave me the comfort of hearing that Lord Cremorne had had good accounts of Miss Dawson while he was at Tunbridge. I long to hear that she keeps mending. Adieu, my dearest friend. I will love you very dearly if you will let me know soon how both you and dear Mrs. Handcock do. Good night, God bless you.

LETTER CLXXI.

Deal, *July* 16, 1787.

INDEED, my dearest Mrs. Vesey, I can bear it no longer; after being accustomed to see you for so long more than once in every day, you leave me for whole weeks without the least intercourse between us, and I am obliged to content myself with that solitary affection which my heart must retain for you. If dear Mrs. Handcock ever wrote to any body, I cannot help thinking she would sometimes write to me, and give me an account both of you and of herself. But alas, she has as great an antipathy to a pen as some people have to a cat, so from her I can have no expectations. The information which I might receive from any of our friends would not include half the particulars which I wish to know, which is in short every thing relative to you—and you cruelly let me know nothing. Do pray relent, and give me a complete account of yourself and dear Mrs. Handcock. I have not yet heard whether Mr. George Vesey is come from Gibraltar. I long to know whether he behaves to you with the kindness you

deserve*. In short, I am too tenderly interested in every thing that concerns you not to wish to know every particular of your situation.

I have nothing to tell you about myself that is worth your hearing, for there is nothing very amusing in the history of an aching head and fluttering nerves; however, I have reason to be thankful, and I hope I am, that at my age things are no worse. I had lately the pleasure of a Letter from Mrs. Montagu, in which she expresses great delight in the conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Montagu, which she seems to think bids fair for happiness. God send it may, as that will much add to her's. Adieu, my dear friend; pray, pray do write to me. Affectionate love to Mrs. Handcock. God bless and preserve you both†!

* The kindness and respect which Mr. Vesey shewed to his uncle's widow has been mentioned in the Preface.

† The Letter closed the correspondence, which Mrs. Vesey's increasing infirmity made her unable to support. This circumstance may also perhaps account for the loss of several of Mrs. Carter's later Letters to her, which were not found in the parcel which contained the rest.

THE

POEM

BY

GEORGE, LORD LYTTELTON,

WRITTEN IN 1762,

AND REFERRED TO IN VOL. III. P. 17.

THE VISION.

WHILE sooth'd I listen'd to the tinkling rills
That stream from Hagley's wood-envelop'd hills,
Where, near the limpid fount, an urn is plac'd,
With Pope's lov'd name by weeping friendship grac'd,
Night's shadowy wing o'er all the solemn scene
Spread soft repose, and majesty serene:
But sudden, through the undulating air,
Notes more than human balmy zephyrs bear;

And beaming from the gloom, like Cynthia's light
The Bard, apparent, strikes my wond'ring sight.
Behold, he cries, that venerable oak,
By age yet undecay'd, by storms unbroke;
The noblest boast of all the sylvan race,
Uniting perfect strength with perfect grace!
Mark how it tow'rs above the highest grove,
Admir'd by men, and lov'd by sovereign Jove!
Beneath its shade the swains protected sing;
To deck its boughs their wreaths the Druids bring;
And hence, as from Dodona's oak, the state
In surest oracles is told its fate!
But what fair myrtle near it lifts its head,
Whose od'rous leaves, by dews ambrosial fed,
Mild fragrance breathe o'er all this happy vale,
Surpassing Blest Arabia's richest gale.
For not alone by Cytherea's hand
This plant is nurs'd; but all the tuneful band
Of Muses, to refresh its verdure, bring
The purest water of the Aonian spring.
How sweet beneath it sound their various lays!
Lo! Phœbus courts its shade, and scorns the bays!
Lo! mix'd with smiling loves the train divine
Of gentle virtues here their garlands twine!
Pallas no more her once lov'd olive tends:
To guard this nobler tree from heav'n descends
The pow'r of wisdom, and with firmest stay
Supports its stem, and drives each noxious blast away!

Here clos'd the Bard his mystic song—his shade
Shrunk from my grasp, and into air decay'd,

But left imprinted on my ravish'd view
The forms of Pultney and of Montagu *.

* The Earl of Bath and Mrs. Montagu, with whom in the summer of the preceding year Lord Lyttelton had been at Tunbridge; and these verses were probably written soon after his return. With Lord Bath he had long been connected both by politics and friendship; and he had lived for many years upon terms of great intimacy with Mrs. Montagu; she had indeed so high an esteem for him, that she never forgave Dr. Johnson for the contemptuous manner in which he spoke of him in his "Lives of the Poets." It was during this stay at Tunbridge that Lord Lyttelton wrote those lines on reading Mrs. Carter's poems in manuscript, which were prefixed to them when printed.

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